A PORTRAYAL OF PEOPLE

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

It has often been said that India lives in many centuries at
the same time. The complex network of diversity that
stretches across time and space has made India a paradise
for anthropologists. Not all of them have come from ab-
road, or represented a colonial relationship; India's own
achievement in this discipline has been considerable,
thanks to the outstanding contribution of individual an-
thropologists and to the Anthropological Survey of India
(ASI). Even in the visual field the range of work seems for-
midable if one takes into account the non-formal, but
nonetheless important, study of communities expressed in
the documentary film and the fictional cinema meant for
the general public, in addition to the visual records for
academia made by the Anthropological Survey of India
in its 50-odd films and thousands of still photographs.
Many streams have thus contributed to the development
of visual anthropology in India which is a relatively nas-
cent sub-discipline of anthropology.

However, the entire range of activity in this area has
suffered from many shortcomings. The formal part of vis-
ual anthropology never received sufficient emphasis to
adapt itself to changing technologies constantly simplify-
ing and improving the work of the filmmaker. The non-
formal, addressed to huge audiences, has naturally used
technology most suited to its primary purposes of large-
scale information and propaganda or entertainment.
Even the ASI, after a glorious start, could not keep pace
with the advances in technology. It is here that visual an-

thropology in the West, being consciously tuned to the importance of the visual experience within the academic discipline, has scored by developing a multiplicity of experiments with the form of visual anthropology by adopting light-weight cameras and sound-recording equipment of considerable sophistication and low cost. From 16mm to video and now to equipment that is extremely small in size and low in weight, a progressive simplification of the paraphernalia is beginning to make film-making as easy and as solitary an act—Jean Cocteau's dream—as writing a book.

All you have to know is the language of cinema.

The need for taking the Indian experience forward was articulated by Jaysinhji Jhala, an Indian visual anthropologist working at Harvard, who has made a number of ethnographic films in Gujarat and in Northeast India. INTACH agreed readily to his proposal for an international seminar on visual anthropology. With a similar readiness on the part of the ASI the seminar became possible. The Anthropological Survey of India, which has emerged as the largest repository of visual materials, came forward to share its experience not only in formulating the plan for the Seminar but also its resources in organising it. INTACH and ASI are co-sponsors of the seminar and its publications. The ASI seeks to expose its technical experts to the new waves generated in recent years in the field of visual anthropology and looks forward to the experience of the seminar in formulating its own perspective in visual anthropology as part of the larger policy on documentation and dissemination of cultures.

Others who responded were Dr. Surajit Sinha, Prof. T.N. Madan of the Institute of Economic Growth, Prof. T.K. Oommen of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Prof. K.N. Sahay of Ranchi University, whose advice and help led to the orientation and organisation of the Seminar. It has also been encouraging to note the interest in the Semi-

nar among the media concerned with film-making, such as Doordarshan, Films Division, Government of India (one of the world's largest producers of documentary films), Directors of Film Festivals and independent film directors.

It was decided to bring together many perspectives—at present somewhat dispersed—in visual anthropology generated by the Anthropological Survey of India, professional anthropologists, filmmakers, etc. In preparing this report on the state of visual anthropology for the Seminar we have amply succeeded. However, one significant dimension that is missing in our effort is the role of the museums of tribal research institutions and some State museums which have done commendable work in building up visual documentation on the people of India. The fictional film, not habitually counted among the forms of visual anthropology, has been given a place in the deliberations of the Seminar. Ashish Rajadhyaksha's paper at the seminar will deal with it in some detail, and the presence of some noted feature filmmakers should help consolidate this extension of the area of interest for visual anthropology.

The purpose of the present publication is to provide a glimpse, far from comprehensive, of the state of the art in India on the eve of a gathering of some its outstanding exponents from many parts of the world.

Kumar Suresh Singh   *Chidananda Das Gupta*
Director-General   Director (Communications)
ASI   INTACH

INTRODUCTION

I welcome the initiative taken by the Indian National
Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage and the Anthropolog-
ical Survey of India in organising an International Semi-
nar on Visual Anthropology at Jodhpur.

Although anthropologists have long been utilising vis-
ual representation—sketches, drawings, still photo-
graphs, and later, movie cameras—for field research, 'vis-
ual anthropology' emerged as a specialised sub-discipline
of anthropology only during the last two decades. Its do-
main of discourse, however, has still to be clearly defined
and the sub-discipline is in a state of 'becoming'.

Intensive observation of the activities of a people in the
totality of a social and environmental context has been the
main method of anthropological field research. Although
anthropologists depend primarily upon written represen-
tation for the communication of what they observe or hear
from the people, it is obvious that many aspects of 'face-
work', socially and culturally defined body movements,
and organisation of 'social space' are lost in the process.
The still camera, the movie camera and the instruments
for sound recording can greatly enlarge the scope for prob-
ing deeply into the activities and responses of a people,
compared to the records based on personal visual mem-
ory. Photographic and audio-visual cinematographic re-
cords, however, are not merely mechanical extensions of
things which can be seen and heard without the aid of in-
struments. Appropriate use of still and movie cameras de-
mands a meaningful combination of the precision of a

natural-historical approach with humane audio-visual sensitivity about the responses of the people. Experiments have been going on in working out the optimal team work for achieving the desired result: a combined team of an anthropologist and filmmaker; an anthropologist turned into a filmmaker (Rouch), a filmmaker turned into an anthropologist (Flaherty). It is obvious that in these collaborative ventures, either in the form of the meeting of two disciplines in a single person or as a combined team of an anthropologist and a filmmaker, the anthropologist must have a clear knowledge of the possibilities and constraints of the language of film, and the anthropological filmmaker must be familiar with the cumulatively developed theoretical and methodological interests in anthropology, particularly with recent trends in ethnographic reporting.

Anthropologists have often been involved in a debate on whether the discipline aims mainly at scientific generalisations about human societies and cultures or is basically an exercise in the ideographic descriptive integration of observed data. I think while the debate continues, in practice, anthropologists have learnt to live with a combined endeavour: controlled comparison of observed data and presentation of 'thick descriptions' or portrayals of socially defined activities, probing deeply into the underlying symbolic structure—the world of 'meaning' of a group of people. Both anthropologists and filmmakers are in a way fellow-travellers—they are interested in the perceptive and authentic reconstruction and representation of the reality of the human condition. While fictional filmmakers have to transform written scripts into visual representation, anthropologists transform visual impressions into written presentations. Anthropologists, however, do not have the freedom to creatively arrange totally imaginary persons and sequences of events in their ethnographic portrayals. They cannot create Apu, Durga and Indir Thakrun and the events pre-

sented in the book and film, *Pather Panchali*. The percep-
tive anthropologist will, however, find that the penetrat-
ing imaginary construction of social environment and so-
cially situated persons, in fictions and fictional films may
sometimes provide deep insights into the human condi-
tion, often missed by the anthropologist on account of his
excessively cautious concern for mechanical observation
of all things happening.

Chidananda DasGupta in his article 'The Realistic Fic-
tional Film: How Far From Visual Anthropology?' points
out how, in contrast to documentary films, fictional films
are concerned with the 'reality under the surface'. Das-
Gupta raises the question whether, after covering the high
quality reached by some professional photographers,
documentary filmmakers and realistic fictional filmmak-
ers, much is left for visual anthropology as a discipline!

It is interesting to note that in response to Someswar
Bhowmik's query about how he rated *Mrigaya* from an an-
thropological point of view, Mrinal Sen responded: 'I
frankly tell you I haven't been able to capture the com-
plexity of tribal life.' Sen feels that 'any creative worker,
whether he is in cinema or in some other medium, has to
be some kind of an anthropologist'. Perhaps Sen wanted
to emphasise the importance of looking into the behaviour
of little known people from their endogenous social norms
and world-views.

Several writers in this volume (Jhala and Roy, Das-
Gupta and Sahay) have emphasised the need for dialogue,
effective two-way communication, between the
filmmaker-observer and the observed. It is expected that
some of the anthropological films will emerge as genuine
forums for wider communication for the silent voices of lit-
tle known tribal and peasant groups. It is also expected
that the 'subjects' of anthropological films may become
interested not only in seeing themselves in films or making
comments on the authenticity of the portrayals, but in
being spokesmen of their own societies, as filmmakers.

Roy and Jhala in their paper 'Perceptions of the Self and Other in Visual Anthropology' present the case of their three experiences in visual anthropology: (i) the Wangchu (*Forgotten Headhunters*). The Bharvad (*Bharvad Predicament*) and the Rajput (*A Zenana*). In the case of the film on the Wangchu of Arunachal Pradesh the recognized official objective was to 'salvage visual anthropology'. Under the limiting circumstances of official sponsorship there was no sense of participation in an ethnic event—a distance was maintained whereby no meaningful interaction between the people and the filmmakers could take place.

In the case of filming the Bharvad pastoralists of Jesod village of Gujarat, the terrain and the people were already known to the filmmakers. They were able to become 'the chronicler, confidante and adviser to the filmed *other*' Here ideas, inspirations and fears became the central focus of presentation. Jhala and Roy state that one may meet a Bharvad 'man' in the bus or town, 'person' in his village home and self (jiu) only on the grasslands. For a full understanding of the Bharvad self 'it is imperative that the filmmakers record Bharvad interaction with their cattle.

The third film venture, *A Zenana*, focussed on the area of residence of a Hindu Rajput family, to which the filmmakers were son and daughter-in-law. This film was based principally on recording prolonged conversations and carefully focussing on the arrangement of social space.

Ashish Rajadhyaksha raises the point of visual anthropologists playing the role of the 'interventionist'. He refers to the significant effort of Anand Patwardhan while making *Hamara Shaher* (1985) a film on Bombay's slum-dwellers. As an active interventionist Patwardhan took the responsibility of warning the slum-dwellers about how the demolition of the slum was being planned by the municipal authorities. As events occurred his camera

played the crucial role of 'a distant, non-intending, sympathetic presence when it shows the slum-dwellers at work or at home.... in tragedy or in anger'. The art of combining controlled intervention and allowing the camera to record the social reality in varied contexts is indeed a very tricky and difficult job. There is always the temptation to play the role of a mediator and saviour without fully sharing the experience of a people living under terrible stress.

The problem of unreal representation and images of the minority communities has been brought into sharp relief by Iqbal Masud in his paper on images of a community. He points out how in Doordarshan's representation of the Muslims the mass media tends to ignore the day-to-day life of common Muslims. It has also systematically failed to record how Muslims all over India share a deep cultural heritage.

The interview with Adoor Gopalakrishnan focusses on areas where anthropologists and professional filmmakers can effectively meet on common ground. Gopalakrishnan makes it clear in his films that he is not an 'outsider' to the people and the social milieu he is portraying. Basically, his films are about the nature of the interaction between the individual and society. He develops the themes of his films by drawing upon the life lived by a particular society he has known intimately.

It may be pertinent at this point to record that the Indian human scenario continues not only to preserve bewildering diversities in levels and patterns of culture, from primary hunters to people living in complex urban-industrial centres, but that there is a *two-way communication* between the *Jana* (tribal), *Deshi/Jati* (rural/peasant/caste) and *Marga* (classical/urban) levels. The visual anthropologist is expected to record the complex mechanism for the maintenance of various kinds of primordial boundaries, as well as channels of communication beyond the ethnic, local and other primordial limits. They should also be interested in the enormous transformation of the tradi-

tional channels, networks and content of communication under the impact of diverse forces of modernization, particularly the new communication media.

One of the striking developments in modern India is the massive assertion of primordial loyalties based on ethnicity, language, region and religious affiliation. This process has often generated a new spurt of creativity in the conscious reconstruction of history and traditional heritage—the search for new identities. For example, the Munda-speaking tribes of Chotanagpur plateau and the adjacent regions have been involved in an inter-tribal regional movement demanding a tribal state, Jharkhand, within the Indian Union. Their movement for political mobilization, in its various phases, has generated scripts for hitherto preliterate groups, a re-statement of traditional origin myths, new dance dramas depicting the glorious fighting spirit of their ethnic heroes, like Birsa among the Munda, and Sidho and Kanee among the Santal, and new formulations of codes of conduct. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, and from Gujarat to Nagaland the entire human conglomeration, particularly the former voiceless people, are being charmed by this creative research for a respectable identity in the modern situation. The new intelligentsia among the Angami Naga of Nagaland, for example, have to face the questions: How are we to present ourselves to—'others' as Angami Naga, as Naga, as a tribal group, an Indian, a Christian and a citizen of the modern world. How does one audio-visually capture the emerging moods arising out of varieties of ethnic axis?

It should, however, be emphasised that the concern of visual anthropology is not merely to trek the path of cultural relativity and diversity. The search is simultaneously for the 'universals' for the species, *Homo sapiens*. This search for the universals will be authentic only if we start with the assumption that the path towards the universal is trodden along many particular axes. Anthropology is not merely an objective study of natural history, a dispas-

sionate exploration of diverse social structures and cultural patterns; it inherently carries a message of 'liberation of mankind' through genuine inter-cultural and multi-cultural communication. From the limited experience gained so far in the growing field of visual anthropology, it appears that the new sub-discipline, continuously chastened by reverence for diverse cultural routes to universals, would be able to play a significant role in continuing education in inter-cultural tolerance.

K.N. Sahay in his paper provides an elaborate historical resume on the present state of visual anthropology in India. He also gives a report of the five-day International Symposium on Visual Anthropology held in December, 1978. The symposium, which was jointly sponsored by the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences and the International Commission on Visual Anthropology, suggested that new kinds of humanistic centres for visual anthropology 'be created to take advantage of the multi-cultural potential of the visual media for furthering human understanding'.

K.S. Singh in his paper 'Anthropological Survey of India and Visual Anthropology' has given a thorough account of the pioneering activities of the ASI in the field of making documentary (silent, 16 mm). ethnographic films. The main emphasis of the ASI was to utilise these films as complementary ethnographic data for the purpose of research and not for making less known people known to the wider national society and the world. Susanta Chattopadhyay has presented an account of his predicaments as a cameraman working in the ASI for 26 years, producing 42 documentary films including the well-known ones on the Onge and the Toda. Chattopadhyay describes the serious limitations of using a 16 mm. movie camera and 16 mm. Kodachrome (ASA) films and also of exposing the films only in natural light. He had to work without the assistance of any professional editor and with very limited help from the professional anthropologists in preparing

the scripts. We are much relieved that K.S. Singh, the present Director-General of the ASI, is keenly interested in taking steps for updating the technology of film production in the ASI and also for supplementing the earlier exclusive concern for making little known people of isolated regions better known.

All the contributors to this volume, which is a kind of status report on visual anthropology in India, are Indians presenting their experiences within the Indian arena. In the International Seminar we are looking forward to fruitful discussions regarding the domain and potential of visual anthropology, between anthropologists and filmmakers and photographers from different parts of the world. We all share an urgent commitment to faithfully and imaginatively recording the rich heritage of rapidly disappearing cultures, but we are not spokesmen for freezing time. We have an equally important commitment to effectively utilize the new techniques of the visual medium to record the spirit of life assertion, the new search for identity and the widening of consciousness of hitherto little known and marginalised people all over the world. We are also interested in recording the tragic processes of withdrawal, apathy and 'loss of nerve'.

Surajit Sinha

Rakhi Roy and Jayasinhji Jhala

An Examination of the Need and Potential for Visual Anthropology in India

The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential impact and usefulness of visual anthropology as a medium to appreciate and share the multifarious facets of contemporary pluralistic societies. Our focus at this conference will be restricted to addressing ways and means that can be developed to contribute to our understanding of India's diverse communities and tribal groups, and how this understanding could assist in the betterment of the life of the polity. The deliberations here, we believe, will have relevance for many other countries, non-western and western, around the globe. The participation of international delegates in this forum therefore stems from two hopes: in the first instance we wish to gain some insight into the philosophy and methodology already employed by those who have articulated concern for this subject and thereby learn from them with regard to our India effort. Secondly, the discussions generated at the seminar should shed new light on some of the problems and point to different solutions than hitherto contemplated.

Definition

Before proceeding to detail the purpose and objectives of the conference, it will be helpful to define what we mean by visual anthropology, especially those aspects of it most

relevant to this meeting. While there is no consensus on a single definition, broadly speaking visual anthropology is the study of mankind, employing as its principal instrument of investigation, the camera. This camera may produce still or moving images, from representations that are products of x-ray technology to those of the motion picture and electronic television medium. The particular section of visual anthropology that we are most involved with here, pertains to the field that is generally termed 'ethnographic filmmaking'.[1] Until now ethnographic filmmakers have concentrated primarily on making films of communities and tribes.[2] This product has been mainly used in the classroom and less frequently on public television in the west.[3] However, in India neither the television industry nor the educational institutions have used ethnographic film programmes.

Objective

Our first task is to bring an awareness of, and to help establish this discipline in India. The primary objective is to create a platform from which it becomes possible to provide 'representation' and a 'voice' for India's communities and tribal peoples, at the regional and central levels. By 'representation' we mean that through film and television a sympathetic recognition of their existence is established in the general awareness of the polity. Representational programmes may be portrayals by lingual and ethnic outsiders about indigenous cultures, made for local and national audiences, academic and general. These programmes could be characterised as the product of 'outsiders'. By providing a 'voice', we mean simply that qualified and respected representatives of communities

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[1] Emilie de Brigard, 'The History of Ethnographic Film' in Paul Hockings (ed.) *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1975.

[2] Margaret Mead, 'Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words' in Paul Hockings, *op. cit.*

[3] Paul Hockings, *Principles of Visual Anthropology, op. cit.*

would be able to promote their views of aspects of their culture to their own and other communities. Programmes with this bias could be termed an 'insider' product. By employing this dual strategy by way of a nationwide programme, it may be possible to create a national awareness that gains a greater recognition for the diversity of cultures and celebrates their individual identity. It places them then, in a relationship that is not hierarchical with regard to each other but which recognizes the dynamic contribution of each. This issue of the recognition of cultural identity is quite fundamental to this project.[4]

There is no overriding motivation to depict any of these cultures in a 'portrait freeze' for the advancement of science or anthropology. We state this at the outset, because the nature of the media of investigation, film and video, lends itself to the archival purpose of documentation and preservation. It is often perceived by those who are not anthropologists that the anthropological endeavour attempts to reduce certain human societies and their environments to human laboratories in which change and progress are to be controlled by the observers and the dominant culture.[5] This attempt at artificial preservation or the perpetuation of deliberate backwardness is antithetical to our purpose, which primarily hopes to engineer a situation in which minority peoples are empowered to decide for themselves the speed of social change.[6] The general public's acceptance of stereotypes that speak of tribal societies as immature, irresponsible to the environment, insensitive to national interests, incapable of self-determination, and which depict tribal persons as child-like are often used by politicians and administrations to per-

[4] S.J. Tambiah, *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

[5] C. von Furer-Haimendorf, *The Tribes of India: The Struggle for Survival*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

[6] B.D. Sharma, *Tribal Development: The Concept and the Frame*, New Delhi, 1978.

petuate colonial modes of domination.[7] Similar misconceptions of the practices of religious communities and the dietary habits of others are conjured up into unacceptable stereotypes that supposedly disturb the well-being of the nation as a whole. The underlying purpose of negative projections have often been to erode the humanity of these communities so that mischief can be visited upon them with impunity.[8] Our purpose is to project the humanity, dignity and individuality of cultures, not occasionally in sympathetic atmospheres such as this seminar, but constantly, through avenues of public television broadcasting and debate in the classroom.

Tasks

To achieve this important purpose, seven intermediate objectives have been identified. They are as follows:
1. To stimulate a dialogue between anthropologists and filmmakers. Issues of concern could include:

      (a) the ethics of representing the 'other';[9]

      (b) an examination of film as a form of text;[10]

      (c) the politics of portrayal;[11]

      (d) the effect and consequences of the command of the spoken language that a visual anthropologist brings to the period of filmic interaction;[12]

      (e) the unique potential of the audio-visual

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[7] L. Kuper, 'International Protection Against Geneocide in Plural Societies,' in S. Plattner (ed.) *The Prospects for Plural Societies*, Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society, 1982.

[8] T. Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, New York: Harper & Row, 1939.

[9] J. Clifford and G.E. Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

[10] Bill Nichols, *Ideology and the Image*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

[11] Peter Braham, 'How the Media Report Race' in M. Gurevitch *et al.* (eds.) *Culture, Society and the Media*, London: Methuen.

[12] J. and R. Jhala, 'Perceptions of the Self and Other in Visual Anthropology' in A. Balikci (ed.) *Anthropologia Visualis*, Montreal: University of Montreal, 1986.

medium to contribute to the understanding of
distinct cultures;[13]

(f) film as a new cultural artefact and instrument
of indigenous peoples;[14]

(g) ethnographic film as a tool for effecting social
change.[15]

2. To promote interaction between Indian visual an-
thropologists and their counterparts in and outside India.
This interaction could be on four levels: theoretical,
methodological, logistical, and technological with regard
to practice and product.

3. To stimulate interest within the ministries of the Gov-
ernment of India, especially the Ministry of Information
and Broadcasting and the television network, for the
exhibition of suitable visual anthropology material, as
well as in the sharing of this heritage with the interna-
tional television networks of the non-western and western
world.

4. To promote follow-up workshops, publications and
films in India. This would also include establishing an
archive, hosting an annually held Ethnographic Film Fes-
tival, and identifying individuals and organisations with
the skills, time and shared sense of purpose with whom
collaborations can be undertaken.

5. To promote the dissemination of information in this
particular sphere.

6. To arrive at standards for training and criteria for
scholarships to be awarded to potential practitioners,
keeping the following issues in the forefront of the discus-
sion: (a) training of urban persons (outsider) versus reg-
ional representatives (insider); (b) the possibility of reg-
ional brain drain; and (c) the rationale for the incorpora-

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[13] G.C. Wilson II and Gutierrez, *Minorities and the Media*, California: Sage
Publications, 1985.

[14] J. and R. Jhala, 'Rethinking Visual Anthropology', in A. Balikci, *op. cit.*

[15] Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of Non-Fiction Film*, Oxford University
Press, 1974.

tion of personnel into this discipline from central national institutions that have a wide regional presence (eg. the defence services which need to have cordial relationships with the peoples whose land they occupy).

7. To publish a book on visual anthropology, which could serve to articulate the philosophical, ethical, methodological and technological issues facing visual anthropology in the Indian and international context today.

Why India?

As stated, the issues to be discussed have international relevance and are not entirely contrived to address the Indian social scene. However, India is a favoured location in which to hold this seminar and we will now discuss specifically why this is so.

India today may be described as a complex multilingual polity, comprised of diverse groups, whose individuals employ different life strategies, evolved by the experience of unique and distinct histories of their respective groups as well as their own personal life trajectories, to give expression and meaning to their lives. Factors of geography, history and trade, while uniting them as expressions of a single and encompassing civilisation, face other factors such as religion and language which serve to create marked boundaries. Illiteracy serves to distance peoples of the same language group, within the same geographical region, so that notions of 'great'/ 'classical' traditions and 'little'/'folk' traditions have emerged in one area.[16] Some characteristics of the regional manifestations of the great/classical tradition are that they are urban, proseletysing and outward looking, making connections with other regions, and engaging in a pan-Indian and even international dialogue of cultural exchange. Little/folk traditions on the other hand are rural, inward looking, retiring and non-ag-

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[16]J.C. Heesterman, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985 and Kapila Vatsyayan, *A Study of Some Traditions of Performing Arts in Eastern India: Margi and Desi Polarities*, University of Gauhati, 1981.

gressive. This propensity makes the local traditions vulnerable to manipulation by the dominant traditions with regard to their knowledge and understanding of other cultures. The conduit of information is structured according to the needs of the intermediary and dominant culture. Though there are dangers in unquestioningly accepting the generalisations sketched above, the typology of cultures in India's heartland is useful for the understanding of how and where the importance of visual anthropology could lie.

In addition to the vertical axis of the great/classical and little/folk traditions, historical circumstances present an additional axis, which articulates itself in terms of the centre and the periphery. This horizontal axis of periphery contains an idea of remoteness from the dominant centre, both in geographical and ideological terms. Many of these societies are physically located on India's international borders or are hidden in her urban centres. The peoples of Tirap district in Arunachal and those of the Andaman Islands represent the cultures of the geographical periphery while the urban Parsis of Bombay represent the ideological periphery from the syncretic secular Hindu-Muslim centre. Many of these cultures have close social ties with groups outside the territorial configurations of India. In between the Andamanese and the Parsis, lie groups that are physically and ideologically closer to the centre but who retain a distinct identity. As we become more specific in our enquiry, our categories would cease to be useful, as all the many cultures will reveal their own peculiar genius. This portrayal of differences, however, permits us to have a notion of difference and of scale.

This great diversity of culture, at ethnic, technological, artistic, institutional and environmental levels reveal a unique and overflowing cornucopia of 'forms of cultural expressions'. Between cultures that are termed 'simple', as the one maintained by the Jarawa of the Andaman Islands and those of the Indian heartland, lies a broad field

of human expression in dance, theatre, music, architecture, social customs, political institutions and medical practices, that is the subject of visual anthropology. These traditions have local, regional, national and international orbits. They work sometimes in concert and at other times in opposition to each other. This, then is the rich Indian heritage which awaits systematic and concerted address by visual anthropologists.

Why now?

Having shown why India and Indian conditions are relevant for the visual anthropology purpose, we turn to answer the question: why is it *now* most appropriate to initiate this discipline in a systematic way? The need and potential for and of visual anthropology defined by Dr. Jean Rouch in 1973, is as relevant today as at the time it was first stated.

> Film, sound and videotape records are today an indispensable scientific resource. They provide reliable data on human behaviour which independent investigators may analyse in the light of new theories. They may contain information for which neither theory nor analytic schemes yet exist. They convey information independent of language, they preserve unique features of our changing ways of life for posterity. Today is a time not merely of change but of spreading uniformity and wholesale cultural loss. To help arrest this process, and to correct the myopic view of human potential to which it leads, it is essential that the heritage of mankind be recorded in all its remaining diversity and richness.[17]

Placed in the present Indian context many of the fears expressed in the passage above remain true and may in-

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[17] Jean Rouch, 'Resolution on Visual Anthropology' (International Commission on Ethnographic Film) in Paul Hockings, *op. cit.*

deed seem more threatening to the body politic, but in a number of ways the project is more realisable today than it was in 1973. The reasons for undertaking the visual anthropology project now, are the following: technological feasibility, political desirability, international example and the promise of international cooperation.

Since the 1970s, a number of movements have developed in regions of India that question the nature of the relationship that the Central Government maintains with the provincial states. Though some have demanded outright secession from the Union, most have demanded greater autonomy in the administration of provincial affairs.[18] It is often reflected that this separatist urge stems from the promotion of the national 'policy of integration'.[19] This policy instituted at the time of independence in 1947 and maintained largely unchanged to the present, is interpreted in the provincial regions to mean that individuals should shed their known traditional identity of caste, language and region and adopt an identity that makes them Indians first. Though many have argued for a more flexible 'policy of accommodation' in which it is possible for individuals and groups to retain a dual identity and a dual membership toward nation and region, this has not in fact come about. The impulse to blend into the proverbial 'melting pot' has been largely resisted and greater exertions by the Centre to demand compliance has led to the birth of centrifugal rather than centripetal tendencies among communities. At this present time it is perceived by many, that many of India's social groups get little recognition or representation on the national television circuit or by the urban controlled film industry.[20] The

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[18] C. Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976.

[19] T.N. Madan 'Coping with Ethnic Diversity: A South Asian Perspective' in S. Plattner, *op. cit.*

[20] G. Fernandes, 'Global Village', Interview in the Boston–produced television programme, *Nova*, 1985.

spirit of incorporation towards the larger political entity is dormant and hence alarming to nationalists. Visual anthropology can have a potentially healing and soothing role to play, in assuring minorities about their status within the nation.

The second reason is that unlike in 1973, India today has the technological capabilities and political will to bring a large fraction of its rural villages into a dialogue with the national centre via the television set. By using this audio-visual medium of communication it has the capacity to leap-frog the 'illiteracy barrier', to convey its message and its vision to the illiterate villager or tribal, in the language of the viewer. By removing the impediment that the necessity of literacy has thus far forced on inter-regional and national dialogue, the audio-visual message couched in the regional language puts a creative communication force into play. This is a powerful tool with which to shape public awareness and opinion; moreover, it can encourage incorporation or secession depending on how the message is crafted, on how communities are represented and in the manner in which groups and persons are depicted. The urban state controlled television message, can come to be viewed as the product of internal imperialism. Visual anthropology has a vital role to play in this regard, for its practitioners are particularly trained to understand marginal, minority and non mainstream cultures as well as the dominant culture of a polity.

Thirdly, with television serving as the principal means of dissemination, for the first time it becomes possible in India, for the visual anthropology product to become affordable and usable in the anthropology classroom. The considerable cost of film has up to this point largely confined anthropological films to the archive, or for the consumption of international viewers in the West.

Fourthly, the availability and promise of international cooperation to provide experience and monetary support to set up the infrastructure of visual anthropology in India,

makes it possible for us in India to select a strategy that could avoid many of the pitfalls encountered by the discipline in Japan and the West. This cooperation includes the training of future practitioners in India and overseas, the use and selection of appropriate technology and equipment for the setting up of central and regional studios and mobile recording units, the methodology for the setting up of an archive, distribution centre and library, the holding of an international Ethnographic Film Festival, the promise of film loans and the sharing of archival materials. The thirteen years since 1973 have seen tremendous technological breakthroughs in Japan and the West; much of the new equipment is more sophisticated, physically lighter, more durable and considerably less expensive. All these factors combine to make the overall project more feasible in India.

Methodology and Implementation

Before going on to describe how the coordination of various elements and components of the visual anthropology project may be brought together in one scheme, we will attempt to summarise the contributions of varied types of programmes that have been produced by various organisations respectively, government, academic, non-profit media stations and individuals in the West and in Japan. From this survey it may be possible to glean which kind of institutions are needed in India and how these institutions need to interact with each other to form a strong foundation on which to establish and perpetuate the discipline of visual anthropology.

We will concentrate on the structure and the three organisational aspects that are seen to be crucial in the promotion of visual anthropology: (*a*) the nature of institutional support for the discipline; (*b*) the extent and scope for the funding of programmes; (*c*) the career trajectories of some of the principal contributors in this field.

It may come as a surprise to some that there are very

few organisations that have an exclusive charter to produce ethnographic films. The best known contributors in this category include the Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies, whose film unit was first headed by Roger Sandall and is now directed by David and Judith Mac-Dougall. This organisation is funded by the Australian government, an annual budget is provided for the making of films, and the directors/filmmakers receive a salary for this purpose.

Another variation of this kind of operation is that set up by Junichi Ushiyama, called the Nippon Audio-Visual Production (NAV), based in Tokyo, Japan. Unlike the Australian organisation, NAV directs its product towards the national television audience, and the company has provided a weekly programme for twenty years. NAV is in the exclusive business of producing ethnographic films, it generates its resources from television revenues and it employs a full time staff that is engaged in this purpose. There are a few other organisations that are constituted primarily to undertake a similar purpose, but they are not many.

The next avenue for support has been found in private foundations, international and national funding agencies, such as UNESCO, the American National Endowments for the Arts, Humanities and the Sciences and from National Television Corporations, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in the U.S. What characterises this effort is the sporadic nature of support. Funding proceeds from project to project rather than continuous support for the discipline. Persons who have made significant contributions using this system include John Marshall, Ricky Leacock, Jean Rouch, Robert Gardner, Gray Kildea, Melissa Llwelyn-Davies and Timothy Asch. Though the support for their films comes from the above agencies, most of the above persons have appointments at educational institutions or in media organisations. Their basic needs are

met by fulfilling their commitments to the organisations which they serve, not from the proceeds of their films.

Doubtless there are other avenues that have been employed to make ethnographic films and to sustain the effort throughout an individual's full career. It is probably more advantageous for India to accord recognition to the path taken by forerunners and to adopt a dual approach, in which government and industry can participate in providing the means for undertaking this endeavour and for research and academic institutions to provide a career base for visual anthropologists. All the various elements for the infrastructure already exist in India. It is a matter of bringing together, in a flexible partnership, the strengths of anthropology, filmmaking and television broadcasting. These three disciplines acting in concert, can make the sustained pursuit of visual anthropology possible in India, and in neighbouring countries that share a similar social, educational and technological base. Clearly anthropologists can best articulate many of the themes and attitudes that filmmakers may address and adopt so that this product can reach the largest audience over the television distribution network. This wide distribution does not necessarily imply that these programmes will be of such a general level that their content will be so simplified so as to be unable to satisfy serious anthropological needs and thus be unacceptable. One of the reasons why visual anthropology in India has made little headway is precisely because there has never existed a financial resource base by which film or television could be used in the classroom. If the practice of visual anthropology finds funding and support from government and industry but does not gain the distribution of the television networks, both regional and national, its finished product will only find a tiny audience in urban film societies, in the projection halls of the ministries of the government and at repositories such as the archives of the Anthropological Survey of India. Under these circumstances it is unlikely

that the funding can be maintained at an effective level for the discipline to establish itself in India. For the entire endeavour to be successful and enduring, it must comprise of the participation of the filmmakers, anthropologists and media personnel.

It is also possible to use the support of organisations that pursue specific objectives, such as institutions that train visual anthropologists and documentary filmmakers, centres of dissemination which also hold periodic Ethnographic Film Festivals, and others that service archival functions. Key personnel managing these institutions have expressed a desire to be associated with the proposed project.

Visual Anthropology in the West

We have spoken so far about why it is possible to introduce visual anthropology in India today, why it is necessary now and what elements are needed in the setting up of an organisational structure through which it can be sustained over a period of time.

We have noted that there are some basic differences of history and geography between the West and India with regard to traditional non-western cultures. The Western effort, at one level may be characterised as one that has attempted to understand 'other' cultures, for the purpose of learning how to subdue, control and administer them, during the period of colonialism. Subsequently that effort was extended in the attempts to help and transform them by following the philosophy of progress,[21] effected by the apparatus of international development agencies. In both instances the material civilization and the social structures of these societies were to be changed, though certain cultural attributes and institutions were to be retained. At a second level, Western interest has been in exploring how

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[21] David Maybury-Lewis, 'Living in Leviathan: Ethnic Groups and the State' in S. Plattner, *op. cit.*

the West may learn about itself through the study of the 'other'.[22] Whereas it may be possible to point to incidental exceptions where the West may have incorporated some aspects of other cultures, its basic stance has been to serve as a 'model for emulation' by non-western peoples. In this general endeavour visual anthropology has played its part, found its justification and its flexibility to be able to use new approaches in its portrayal of human society. We will now attempt to survey and summarise the approach of western filmmakers and anthropologists who have made efforts to understand non-western cultures. We will also remark on how changing and improving technology has given birth to new methods, styles of portrayal, attitudes of address and the emergence of new purposes.

Though time and technology impose a linearity on our understanding of the historical development of visual anthropology it does not necessarily preclude a plurality of approaches; however, in certain periods particular philosophies and styles have predominated, generated by particular philosophies and attitudes about the study of peasant and tribal peoples. The emphasis during this early period was to concentrate on non-urban and often illiterate groups, conceived to be societies without history[23] marked by a subsistence economy and supported by a relatively simple technology. This feeling and need was so marked that in many instances the subject people of the cinematic portrayal were encouraged to return to the so called natural state, a time before European contact.[24] This return to the pure and unspoiled state was artificially achieved by people temporarily reverting to partial or total nudity, using tools which in reality had been long replaced. These pictures were supported by a narrator's

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[22] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London: Vintage Books, 1979.

[23] Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

[24] Asen Balikci 'Reconstructing Cultures in Film' in Paul Hockings, *op. cit.*

commentary which in many cases reinforced this image.[25] The isolation and exotic rites of these groups received greater recognition than their contact and networks with other peoples, both spatially and hierarchically. This kind of portrayal fitted nicely with the technology of the times, which made the syncronic recording of visual and audio images impossible. From this emerged the 'observational' style of ethnographic filmmaking in which the filmmaker attempted to become a 'fly on the wall'[26] present but socially invisible. The filmed people were encouraged to assume a non-interactive stance with those recording. In fact, the greater the projected invisibility of the filmmaker, the greater was the accepted veracity of the scene depicted. In this kind of film people were seen but were never heard. It was not important to know what they had to say for themselves since that was the privileged job of the learned commentator, who served as a one way bridge of information, i.e. from the foreign to the western academic or general audience.

The subsequent development of the ethnographic movement has attempted to modify this dominant attitude and style. Participatory filmmaking,[27] interactive filmmaking,[28] the diary method,[29] and other approaches attempt to change a view that is now considered more and more inadequate. The diverse interests of a large number of filmmakers, gave rise to cinema verites[30] the advocacy approach[31], the narrative style[32], the informational

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[25] J. Preloran, 'Documenting the Human Condition' in Paul Hockings. *op. cit.*

[26] C. Young, 'Observational Cinema' in Paul Hockings, *op. cit.*

[27] David MacDougall, 'Beyond Observational Cinema' in Paul Hockings, *op. cit.*

[28] T. and P. Asch and L. Connor, *Jero Tapaikan: Balinese Healer*, an ethnographic film monologue.

[29] J. Rosenbaum, *Film: The Front Line*, Denver: Auden Press Inc., 1983.

[30] Bill Nichols, *op. cit.*

[31] Erik Barnouw, *op. cit.*

[32] Bill Nichols, *op. cit.*

style[33], the lecture, and the entertainment approach. The subjects of this effort include dance, music, ritual, theatre, war, and everyday life. The pursuit of recording the personality of individuals, the oral histories of groups, the aesthetics of varying traditions, and the belief systems on which ritual acts and festival attitudes are based, has gradually brought out the voice of the people filmed. Today we are occasionally able to meet thinking and articulate individuals through the medium of film and television.

As the practice of ethnographic film has evolved there has grown a realization that in many cases the most rewarding field strategy has been to establish a dynamic collaboration between anthropologists and filmmakers. This awareness has been sharpened by the acknowledged need to include indigenous representatives in the filmic process. The need to have these resources has been met by differing methods, ranging from one in which a single individual acquires training in the fields of anthropology and film and adds this to the knowledge of his or her people, and thereafter proceeds to employ the collected talents in addressing that specific culture, to other strategies that employ the collaboration of three or more individuals who have particular skills.

It must be stressed, however, that despite the involvement of local representatives in the making of visual anthropology documents, these products of the western ethnographic film endeavour are statements made about 'other peoples', which have primary meaning for the culture of the filmmaker. The film is in dialogue with the filmmaker's culture. Unlike an artefact or institution that emanates from the culture and is useful and meaningful within indigenous boundaries, most ethnographic films have neither presence nor use within the culture they are statements of. This is not to suggest that many of these

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[33] Erick Barnouw and S. Krishnaswamy, *Indian Film*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

films have not been used to affect the community for good or ill, and hence affect the society they portray, rather it suggests that when this is the case the agent and impulse of the impact comes from a stimulus that originates from outside the culture. The indigenous culture reacts more than it acts.

Summary and conclusion

In summary, visual anthropology is the study of mankind employing as one of its main tools the camera. It creates visual texts—films and video tapes that celebrate the aesthetics of dance, theatre, music and the other arts, it comments on the social institutions such as law, marriage, ritual and war, and it occasionally plays the role of an advocate for social change. Born in the West, the discipline has largely concentrated on the study of non-western peoples. The resulting portrait has been constructed in the context of Western academic and societal needs.

In India's case and in polities which are similar, it is quite possible to perpetuate the same trajectory with regard to the populations filmed. There is a dominant culture which in fact rules over a multiplicity of smaller cultural units. However, there is a fundamental difference between most countries of the West and India. The cultures of India are an integral part of the body politic; this block forms an internal political constituency, and its multiple languages are the medium of social discourse. In sharing programmes within and across language boundaries of India, the project does not merely bring an awareness of persons who share few similarities of everyday living with the viewership located on the other side of the globe, and with whom the viewership is vitally but distantly related by virtue of a shared humanity. Rather it brings an awareness of factors that affect the practical and pragmatic issues of interdependence, forced by the consequences of contemporary geography and the pervading economic system. This realisation of being different and

equal could engineer an outward looking and generous attitude towards the populations of other provinces and by extension towards the peoples of the neighbouring countries—China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Seychelles, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Burma, Bhutan and Nepal, with whom they share multivalent ties.

In concluding, we suggest that visual anthropology could initiate discourse across the illiteracy barrier and provide a platform from which the cultures of India could gain both 'voice' and 'representation' at many levels of discourse. Visual anthropology has the ability to address the arts and other social institutions in a unique way for the purposes of analysis and documentation. The project is technologically feasible; there is the promise of international cooperation; and potential academic and executive organisational infrastruture exist, which could make the establishment of visual anthropology in India possible.

K. S. Singh

Anthropological Survey of India and Visual Anthropology

Ethnographers with their penchant for documentation used their pens to sketch and their cameras to photograph various facets of the life of a community they studied. The ethnographic accounts are thus replete with both sketches and photographs. Even a work like Watson & Kaye's *People of India*[1] compiled for the education of the British elite, contained photographs of members of various communities of India in their natural setting, semi-naked or bedecked with their jewellery for the benefit of visitors. No anthropological research on a community was considered complete without a liberal use of sketches and photographs of artefacts of material culture, socio-religious ceremonies, housetypes, ecology, economic activities and so on. Official ethnography followed this tradition, with the formation of the Ethnographic Survey of India which unhappily existed for a period of four years (1905-9). Similarly, an anthropological section in the Zoological Survey of India had in turn been created in 1927 out of the Zoological and Anthropological sections of the Indian Museum. The location of anthropology in the Zoological Survey partly explains the early bias in favour of physical anthropology and the relative lack of visual material. From these somewhat random beginnings emerged a

[1] J. Forbes Watson and John William Kaye, *The People of India*, 1868.

separate department of anthropology and the Anthropological Survey of India (ASI) in December 1945.

The ASI was established with the following objectives:

(*i*)   To study the tribes and other communities that form the population of India both from the biological and cultural point of view.

(*ii*)   To study and preserve the human skeletal remains, both modern and archaeological.

(*iii*)   To collect samples of arts and crafts of the tribes of India.

(*iv*)   To function as a training centre for advanced students in anthropology and for administration.

(*v*)   To publish the results of the researches.

Through the various stages of its evolution, the ASI has adhered to its policy and programmes on bio-cultural documentation of the people of India, both in pre-historic and contemporary perspectives, by using all techniques including the visual ones. Use of maps, sketches and photographs continued to be stressed through projects such as the study of skeletal remains from Harappan sites, cultural and racial affinities of the primitive tribes of India and their distribution, and study of religion, economy and physical characteristics of many tribal groups. Anthropologists' notebooks preserved in the data archives are full of sketches of the objects and traits studied by scholars. That photography was considered intrinsic to documentation by anthropologists was evident from the fact that such scientific facilities were consciously sought to be provided from the very beginning. An early document on the development of the ASI says:

> An adequate photographic record of the rapidly disappearing ancient civilizations of India is of great importance. In addition to the regular photographer, each officer of the Survey will have some training in photography and at least three

complete sets of first class camera (Leica or Contax) equipment and three sets of miniature cine camera equipment, with full provision of film, will be required. Arrangements will have to be made for the classification and storing of a film library. For the linguistic and music specialists recording apparatus will be needed, and a library of records established.[2]

In the first flush of independence the ASI committed itself to exploring remote parts of India and to studying the primitive communities living there. A number of expeditions were sent out in the late 1940s and through 1950s, led by the Director himself or by a senior officer. The areas covered by them were Jaunsar-Bawar (May 1947), Andaman Islands (1948), Abor Hills (1954), Little Andamans (1955), Rupkund (1956), Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills (1957), Tripura (1958-59), etc. These expeditions were inspired by the urge to know about the people about whom little documentation was then available. They were led by teams which were multi-disciplinary in their composition. The photographer invariably accompanied the team. So did the cine-cameraman who also sometimes drew up a village map and sketched housetypes. The team, apart from studying the people, collected ethnographic specimens for the ASI museums, and built up a rich collection of photographs, and at the same time produced an array of films.

The Rupkund expedition, sent out in 1956 to unravel the mystery of the mass of skeletal remains deposited in the lake, is illustrative of this phase of explorations. The official report stated briefly as follows:

> The Rupkund expedition of August-September 1956, left Calcutta on August 25, 1956, by train and reached Kathgodam on the 27th August.

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[2] Memorandum on development and organisation of ASI, No. D. 791-Ar 46 dated 16th July 1946, Old Record Room, ASI.

From there they travelled by bus up to Dangoli, a distance of 115 miles. The expedition started marching from Dangoli on August 29 and reached Rupkund on September 3, that is after seven days' march. The route followed from Dangoli to Rupkund was via Gwaldam, Dewal, Mundouli, Wan (the last inhabited village), Abin Kharik (Ali Bugyal), Patar Nachaunia, Kailwa Vinayak and Hunia Thor. The base camp was set up at Hunia Thor which is about two miles from Rupkund. The party on reaching Rupkund on 3.9.1956 examined the lay-out of the lake, *took some photographs*, collected some human skeletal and other remains, and then returned to the base camp at Hunia Thor at about 11.30 p.m. On the morning of September 5, the party again went up to Rupkund, collected more skeletal and other materials and returned to the base camp at Hunia Thor at about 2 p.m. The expedition left Hunia Thor on September 6, and returned to Calcutta on September 14, 1956, after retracing their steps by the same route as mentioned above. The remains collected by the expedition consisted of human skeletal as well as cultural materials.[3]

The report concluded that the Rupkund tragedy occurred nearly five hundred years ago; that its victims were generally adult, but there were a few who were below 18 years and probably even younger; that judging from the cephalic index, head length, head breadth, minimum frontal breadth and stature the victims were probably from some region in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan or Punjab and that there was no evidence to suggest that the victims were part of an army. The interesting point is that the entire expedition was filmed (see Appendix II, Film No. 5).

During this phase of expeditions and explorations the

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[3] A statement on Rupkund tour of August-September 1956 and the relics collected there. Old Record Room, ASI.

ASI set up its regional offices in the Islands at Port Blair (1951), in the north-east at Shillong (1953), central India at Nagpur (1955) and in the south at Mysore (1960). This pattern of decentralization helped in undertaking intensive micro-level studies in tribal ethnography, arts and crafts and related subjects etc., aided by photography and filmmaking.

The second phase in the development of the ASI is marked by national level surveys and diversification of micro-level studies. The objectives of anthropological research during this phase were reflected in the policy resolution of 1970, adopted ten years later, which committed the ASI:

(*i*) To continue its original committment of uninterrupted researches and surveys in social/cultural and physical anthropology throughout the country.

(*ii*) To lay special emphasis on the applied aspects of anthropology which have contemporary relevance and national significance.

(*iii*) To work in close collaboration with University Departments of Anthropology, Tribal Research Institutes and other organisations interested in anthropology.

(*iv*) To function as a clearing-house and co-ordinator, at the national level, for all agencies in the field of anthropology.

(*v*) To act as the Anthropological Adviser to the Government of India.

The national level projects included the Cultural Zone Survey (1959-61). It involved the mapping of distribution of material traits and sketching of artefacts, from rural areas, on an all-India scale. The photographer and photo-artists accompanied the survey teams which worked in one or more than one villages in 313 out of 322 districts of India. Altogether 430 villages were visited for the study of material traits such as settlement patterns,

housetypes, diet, dress and ornament and footwear, means of transport, domesticated animals etc., agricultural tools, crops grown, oilpress, basketry, pottery, occupation and market. The survey also included items on gods and festivals, village sanitation and hygienic practices. The main report followed by reports on individual traits contained a mass of sketches of material artefacts described above. The teams were led by young anthropologists (age group 25-37) who travelled in different parts of India becoming skilled observers, later turning to the study of caste, popular forms of religion in India, in order to discover the evidence of regional differentiation.[4] This was unique.

> One is struck by a general accordance between the findings in regard to various items of material culture in rural India. Firstly, there is a certain measure of local differentiation; and there is also a considerable amount of interpretation in almost every case. Secondly, the boundaries of the culture areas or sub-areas do not tally with Grierson's boundaries of either linguistic families like Indo-Aryan and Dravidian or of branches within either of these families. Material items of culture seem to have independent extensions of their own; and these, very roughly tend to be in accord with one another.[5]

During this phase the ASI took up the all-India physiometric survey, which could be seen as a continuation of the work started by Dr. B.S. Guha in 1931. It was conducted in three years over the period 1961-63. Sixteen measurements were taken on stature, head and face, upper and lower limbs; somatoscopic observations were made of skin colour etc. Ten years later an all-India Bio-

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4 Nirmal Kumar Bose, "The Position of the Social Sciences: India: I Organisation," *Science and Culture*, Vol. 29, No. 2, February 1983.

5 Nirmal Kumar Bose (ed.), *Peasant Life in India: A Study in Indian Unity and Diversity*, Memoir No. 8, 1961, ASI.

Anthropological Survey was taken up to collect data on demogenetic aspects of the Indian population such as morbidity, diet and food habits, demography, physical measurement, etc. The first survey made use of the camera to photograph frontal and profile views of male objects; the second also collected photographic material on morbidity conditions etc.

More important from the point of view of visual anthropology, was the extensive coverage by the cameraman of tribal and peasant communities, marginal groups such as beggars and slum dwellers, minorities such as Muslims and Jains, fisherfolk living in coastal areas, in the course of the micro-level studies launched by the Survey during this period. A special area of study related to the network of culture and civilization formed by religious institutions, temples and *mutts*, and the calendar of religious festivals and festivities was also intensively covered by the cameraman.

Two more studies should be mentioned. One related to area study of such regions as Bastar and Chattisgarh and the other to the study of various ecological zones. Both gave ample scope for photographic documentation of the terrain and the people. Later, the photographic material helped in mapping out the ecological zones as part of the study of the carrying capacity of land and human adaptation to high altitude, etc. Significantly a cartographic unit was established under the photographic section; this unit prepared the Tribal Map of India and survey maps on an all-India basis of culture and tribal economy, etc. A photographer accompanied the cartographer on his tour to carry out a land use survey in Mizoram, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, and among the Onges and Gaddis.

The third phase witnessed the continuation of some of these and the initiation of new studies with a regional and national coverage. The objectives of the ASI in 1985 were amplified to commit this organisation to the survey of the human surface of India, as follows:

(*i*) To continue its original commitments to uninterrupted researches and surveys in social, cultural and physical anthropology throughout the country.

(*ii*) To take up the anthropological study of all the people of India.

(*iii*) To take steps to salvage and preserve cultural artefacts faced with the threat of extinction and those which even otherwise need to be preserved and to act for this purpose in coordination with and provide research inputs to the Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya.

(*iv*) To study and promote awareness of the rich and composite culture of the country and of the contribution of each community to this heritage.

Even though the resolution on the above lines was adopted in 1985, it reflected the trends that had emerged ten years earlier. New stations were opened for western India at Udaipur in 1975 and for eastern India in Calcutta in 1976. New all-India projects on tribal movements, tribal economy, tribal customary law, tribes in contemporary India etc., were taken up. However, the most prestigious and also the most comprehensive of such projects has been the project on People of India which seeks to generate a brief profile of each of the 5000 communities in the country. It is proposed to generate photographic material on each of these communities.

Another line of activity has been the building up of museums which contain the documentation and display of visual material (Appendix I). Actually, the ASI had taken up the construction of the anthropological gallery of the Indian Museum in Calcutta. A chain of regional museums were set up at all regional offices in the 1970s particularly during the Fifth Plan period. As of date these museums have collected 8679 artefacts belonging to 261 ethnic groups. It was again during this period that the

ASI was called upon to prepare the project report of the first National Museum of Man, which was submitted in December, 1976. The National Museum of Man was set up as part of the ASI in 1977. This museum may be considered as the first museum of anthropology in the country, which would display the evolution of man and human variation with reference to the subcontinent, the evolution of material culture, and the whole range of living cultures belonging to the tribal, artisan and other rural communities. It. is proposed to use the latest audio-visual techniques to generate the intended museum effect.

II

We now take up content analysis of the visual material generated by the ASI over the past forty-two years. As has been mentioned earlier, the process of the photographic documentation of communities and cultures started from the very beginning in the ASI. A photographic unit was set up in 1946, followed by a cine unit in 1949, manned first by photo-artists and then by a cine technician from 1953.

Photography was considered an intrinsic part of documentation. Therefore, from the very beginning a photo-artist or a cine technician would invariably accompany a cultural anthropologist on the expeditions or tours connected with ethnographic studies. Thus a huge archive of photographic material, about 40,000 items (see Appendix II) both prints and negatives, was built up at the head-office and regional offices. Photography was thus consciously used as a tool of documentation to generate and supplement field data, not only for individual tribal groups but also for the whole range of material culture which included items on settlement patterns, housetypes, dress, ornaments, utensils, mode of transport, pottery, basketry, etc. Unfortunately it has not been possible to classify all negatives which relate to potraits of male and female members of a community, dress and ornaments,

and their cultural implements, various modes of occupa-
tion, village setting, body painting, markets, etc. The
number of negatives for each of these items varies from
five to fifty.

Over this long period the ASI has produced 50 films
and purchased two. The details of forty-five are given in
the table below.

TABLE 1
Number, duration and length of film production, 1951-1983

Decade	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s
Total	14	21	7	3
Duration	14 minutes (Abor dance) to 56 minutes (Reang)	8 minutes (Konark temple) to 57 minutes (Juang)	11 minutes (inlay craft of Mysore) to 37 minutes (Kinnaur)	20 minutes (Siddis) to 30 minutes (Chola-) naicken)
Length	103 metre to 410 metres	86 metres to 417 metres	122 metres to 405 metres	247 metres to 410 metres

Out of the 50 films, 48 were silent and only two have
soundtracks. Again out of 48 silent films, 36 were in colour
and 12 in black and white.

A brief description of the contents of 45 of these films is
given in Appendix II. The content analysis of the films
shows that most of them dealt with the ethnography of tri-
bal groups such as the Abor, Khasi, Toda, Reang, Onge,
Juang, Nicobarese, Gaddis, Cholanaickan, etc. It should
be noted that some of these communities belong to the
very primitive category who face the threat of biological
and even cultural extinction. Therefore, these films have
also to be seen as part of a salvage operation. The second
set of films relates to expeditions to remote areas such as
Little Andamans, NEFA, Tons Valley, Garhwal (Rup-
kund), Tripura, etc. A third category of the films relates to
religious institutions such as temples (Kashi, Puri,

Bhubaneshwar, Konarak), pilgrimage, festivals (Mysore Dusserah) etc. Still another category of films related to arts and crafts of particular places such as Manipur, Manbhum, Mysore, etc. The last category relates to miscellaneous items such as the Nulias of Puri, a Santal marriage at Santiniketan, etc.

A further scrutiny of the content of these films reveals that they covered such facets as appeared important to an ethnographer. For example, the film on the Abor (Padam) showed their village, role of the bamboo tubes as water carriers, function of women in agriculture, collection of firewood, weaving and domestic utensils, technology of agriculture and dance, etc. Probably the most complete ethnographic film that the ASI produced in this period was on the Onge, where everything except copulation was shown. In fact the film showed the process of contact of the anthropologist with this community, its hunting and food gathering operation, daily chores such as bathing, fishing and eating, decoration of the body, etc and communal huts which have almost disappeared today. Considering the fact that the Onges today have been settled in a colony this ethnographic film serves as a historical backdrop to the present situation of the Onge which is radically different in many ways from what has been portrayed in the film.

III

This brings us to the question of the relationship of visual anthropology and anthropology, that of anthropologists and photo-artists and cine technicians, and finally to the question of the organisation and technique of production of films in the ASI.

As mentioned earlier, photography or filmmaking was always considered an intrinsic part of documentation. It was, however, subordinate to the dominant objective of the anthropological research of a people and its culture. The photo-artist or cameraman would follow an an-

thropologist where he led him. In the words of a photo-artist who served the ASI from the beginning:

> In the early years of my service in Anthropological Survey of India (1955-75) then known as Department of Anthropology, photographs were taken mainly to assist Research Officers studying various tribes and communities. It was confined to ethnographic studies. Photography was then used, as it is now, for realistic representation of places, people and events, and in discussions to substantiate a point of view. A situation or an event is recreated with an array of photographs taken earlier. Nowhere was photography used as a creative tool. Nor was it used to promote or to exploit the tribes or communities studied. Photography for the sake of photography was never encouraged. Commercial exploitation was curbed and severely criticized. Depicting the actual reality was very much appreciated. It was more of functional use. As said earlier the photos so taken were arranged in a sequence after a considerable length of time helped in recalling, reconstructing or recapitulating the whole complex event. Anthropologists knowing the importance of photography as the most powerful means of visual communication used and utilized it successfully for their ethnographic studies. Portraying the social and cultural reality in all its spirit and splendour, truthfulness and authenticity were the main consideration in recording and reportage. In the span of twenty years of service, I had the opportunity of photographing various tribes and communities; some of them are: Bhatras, Dorlas, Durvas, Maria and Murias of Bastar, Gadulia Lohars of Rajasthan, Chenchu and Yanadis of Andhra, Kannikars, Mallaulladan of Kerala, fisherfolk of Tanur (Kerala), Hakki Pikkis, Jenukurubas and

Kille Kaithas of Karnataka. There is no place for 'make-believe' techniques in anthropological studies.[6]

Therefore, as a photographer has observed, photography was seldom an independent activity, a creative pursuit as he would have probably liked it to be. 'As such photographers have rarely got an opportunity to do any work on their own initiative. They have to respond to the miscellaneous ad hoc demands from the anthropologist. As such not much creative photography has yet been produced by this Survey.'[7]

The cine cameraman also was of the view that the films produced by the Survey constituted only research material for ethnographic studies and were mainly for documentation for research purposes. They were not meant to enlighten the public mind though they could be used for public education.

> The cinematographic record serves as a permanent and valuable storehouse of information which has been utilised in a great number of research projects. Where it is not possible for a research worker to observe immediately all the complexities of a sequence of behaviour the motion picture record of it allows him to observe repeatedly the same event on projection.....One of the functions of cinematography in the field of anthropology is to prepare a permanent record of a culture or some culture sequences, so that in subsequent years this will serve as the basis for an evaluation of changes occuring as a result of culture contact. Even more valuable is the filmed record of a behaviour sequence or some of rituals that may subsequently die out (for example the

6 S.C. Shankaran, personal communication.

7 P.R. Das, 'Photography in the ASI', *Programmes of Research in Cultural Anthropology and Allied Disciplines*, edited by S.C. Sinha, p. 57.

buffalo sacrifice during the funeral ceremony among the Toda). The passage of time will make the anthropological research films more valuable since the cultures are constantly changing and even disappearing.....The educative value of the ethnographic cinematography to the students of anthropology, and as a matter of fact to the general public, goes without saying. While listening to a topic in anthropology the audience may not grasp all the details to the same degree as when they are also shown a documentary film on the subject. The visual impression with all its details stays better in the mind and aids research work. It is educative to the layman also. Whenever any documentary film is shown, the general public too get interested in seeing it.[8]

The role of visual material for documentation rather than for education was stressed by the policy makers in the Survey. For instance, a line was drawn between the role of the Information Ministry on the one hand and that of the ASI on the other.

At one time there was a proposal that the films made by the Survey should be utilized with advantage by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for educational purposes and that there should be closer cooperation between the two organisations in this regard. The Director of the ASI observed that the Survey had no programme for producing documentary cine films through the Films Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Survey accordingly produces cine films covering its research activities.[9]

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also felt likewise. According to them the films were of no use as all such 16 mm films made by the Department of Anthropol-

8 S.K. Chattopadhyay, 'Cinematography in ASI,' *ibid*, pp 436-37.

9 File No. 18 regarding films, Old Record Room, ASI.

ogy, were made for the silent screen, the running speed being slower than that of the talkie film. Thus while they served the purpose of the Department of Anthropology the documentary angle in the treatment of subjects so important from the information point was missing.[10]

Actually, the ASI was way behind in adopting the latest technology of film production. It was a deliberate policy in the ASI to produce silent movies because they were for internal consumption of its anthropologists, only aids to their research. The cameramen's equipment was outdated. The lens focusing was done by either guessing the distance or by footage measurements. A reversal Kodakchrome film was used. The negative could be screened directly after washing. No print was required to be made of the negative. If the negative was destroyed the whole document was lost. It was not possible to apply sound to such films. The films thus produced were silent movies. Most of the films were also without a script or a sub-title and were not critically edited by professionals. It is only in the early '80s that the ASI produced two films on the Siddis and Cholanaickan which were provided with a soundtrack and duly edited. As one of the photographers says:

> The tools of photography were out-dated by any standard even then. A bare camera with or without flash unit with sufficient quantity of films were the items taken to fieldwork in the early years. An old model Rollei-flex or Ikoflex or 35 mm camera of unknown make was taken for fieldwork. Filters, close-up and interchangeable lenses were not known to the authorities concerned. Photos were taken from all possible angles, view points of the village settlement patterns, of flora and fauna. Earliest opportunity was taken to snap the outstanding, dominant features lest they become familiar.

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10 File No. 18 regarding films. Old Record Room, ASI

Ceremonies, events and functions were covered in detail. Nothing was left to chance. With the good rapport and participation as observer repeated photos were taken for authenticity and truthfulness.'

On returning to headquaters, the rolls were processed in standard developers, (like Kodak, Illford, Agfa), using time and temperature method. The negatives were classified both tourwise as well as tribe/community-wise, giving all relevant details, at times technical details also. They are stored in fire-proof almirahs/cabinets. Albums depicting the life and culture of tribes, village studies were duly opened for the use of research staff.[11] Gradually, filters, close-up lenses, flash were added invariably to the equipment. Rapport with people rather than the sophistication of the equipment helped coverage under village studies or ethnographic studies. Snaps were not counted but the full coverage in its entirety was taken into account. Repeated fieldwork emphasized the importance of the events and their deviation and variance were recorded.

Before we conclude discussions on this aspect it would be interesting to assess the quality of anthropological input that went into the making of the films and collection of photographs. The anthropologist was the leader. He also was the educator of the technical members of the team whom he guided and to whom he explained various facets of the culture. An example of this is offered by the film on the Toda particularly with its bow and arrow ceremony. This ceremony was reinterpreted by one of our anthropologists as symbolizing:

...the passing of the 'life force' of a clan into the

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11 B.B. Goswami, 'Bow and Arrow Ceremony of the Toda: An Interpretation.' *Bulletin of the ASI*, Vol.XIV, No. 1 & 2, p. 38, 1967.

uterus of the woman of another clan. The life force is symbolised by the arrow which shoots into the uterus of the pregnant woman. It is significant to note that the arrow is made of grass blade. Though the word 'arrow' is used by the Toda in many different ways and contexts (detail Rivers: 1906: 586) but everywhere it has the quality of piercing. The bow symbolises the Toda universe. (They have a special attachment for the arched-form for instance, the front of the house, rainbows, etc.,). The materials used for making bows and arrows are jungle shrubs. These are the products of nature, the attributes as well as qualities of which are life, tenderness and growth. These are given on a new moon day because, it is believed, the growth of the moon will have sympathetic effect on the development of the child in mother's womb. For the Toda, the seventh month is auspicious for, firstly, it is an odd month; and secondly, only in the seventh month is the woman competent enough to take the life force. She nurtures the life force for an odd number of months (approximately three months) inside her own body and then gives birth to a child.[12]

Such interaction between the anthropologist and cameraman did not always exist. Sometimes the latter would push out on his own to make a film on the nomadic tribe of the Rabari or Bison-horn Marias or Hakki Pikki to exchange and expose the rolls in his possession. No long term policy or plan of action existed; ad hocism was more often than not the rule.

There was a difference in perception of the importance of equipment between an anthropologist and a technician. The anthropologists thought that given good rapport with the people and cooperation among the members of a team,

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12 S.C. Shankaran.

which was always abundant, anything could be photographed by the cameraman. Anthropologists, according to the cameraman, did not show adequate understanding of the instrument. Cameramen always demurred in the following words:

> Research staff (anthropologists), with few exceptions, are of the view that with good rapport anything could be photographed by any camera. Unfortunately, this is not so. Inadequacy of equipment and lack of advanced technical knowledge fails to convert an idea into the photo image. Repeated failures ultimately lead to abandonment of the plan. This point of view was/is never entertained. A simple camera is not everything. A good standard camera needs a number of other accessories for correct coverage. Any shortage of accessories causes discomfiture to the photographers. Further, the required amount of publicity and showmanship has been, unfortunately, missing. Many of the highly acclaimed photos have not seen the light of the day. Standard cameras are neither durable nor can capture the realities of life in all their candour. Sophistication of equipment and professionalism in approach, interest and zeal are the hallmarks of any creditable achievement. And it is earnestly hoped that this reality will be recognised at the earliest.[13]

Inspite of defective equipment a great deal was achieved. As a photographer recalls with a sense of pride:

> With the given (out-dated) equipment, the work covered is tremendous, highly reliable and authentic, that any institution can be proud of. The value of the innumerable photos so collected in various field trips in far off places, on fast chang-

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[13] S.C. Shankaran.

ing social/cultural values and of the flora and fauna will be of immense use for reconstructing social/cultural history of the people studied. Many of the customs, usage, festivals are [now] abandoned. Photographs and photographs alone can fill the inadequacy of the description of forgotten events.

At another level:

The photographs helped in writing papers and monographs, comparative village studies. It also helped research staff and others in acquiring Ph.Ds. The photos also helped in establishing rapport [with the people], for further intimate probe and also as a presentation. An archive of such photographs would be an ideal repository of the cultural life of different tribes and communities.

Photos were taken mainly for ethnographic/village studies. The photos taken are authentic and reliable with minimum equipment. The Survey has vast collection of photos on the life and culture of various tribes and communities, and village studies. The fast changing cultural practices of these tribes and communities could be preserved only by the Survey by photo archive.[14]

Our films have also been screened for the benefit of a wide cross section of people including film producers, artists and students.

IV

The ASI emerged as the custodian and repository of the largest collection of ethnographic material, mostly on tribal communities and on many facets of our culture. Seen in the background of the changes which have transformed radically the landscape of our economy and culture re-

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[14] S.C. Shankaran.

cently, these materials may help us to recreate and reconstruct the sequence of cultural evolution and transformation. These materials also need to be classified, documented and analysed.

As far as the current and future programmes are concerned three lines of activity may be mentioned. First, the ASI is going to strengthen its infrastructure and upgrade its equipment, set up cine units for each regional office and a photographic laboratory, train technicians in new skills. Secondly, identification of themes in consonance with policy priorities for documentation is underway. The new cultural policy formulated under the Seventh Five Year Plan commits the organisation to the salvage of such aspects of culture as face the danger of extinction. The new policy resolution of the ASI adopted in 1985 throws open its research programmes for all communities of India. This implies that visual anthropology in the Survey has to play an increasingly important role in the documentation of communities other than the tribes. Thirdly, this task has to be performed in collaboration with the National Museum of Anthropology now re-christened Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalay and others. Fourthly and lastly, the traditional function of documentation for ethnographical research has to be supplemented with the provision of an educative and extension role for the visual material in possession of our organisation in the context of the importance of dissemination of culture, of the knowledge about the diversity of our cultural traditions. Therefore, a greater interaction is envisaged between the ASI, Films Division of Government of India, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and other bodies engaged in the revival, recreation and dissemination of our cultural traditions.

Appendix-I
MUSEUM COLLECTION

Office and location	No. of ethnic groups	No. of museum collection pieces
Headquarters, Calcutta	67	1884
North-east Region, Shillong	34	803
Southern Region, Mysore	42	1312
Andaman & Nicobar Region, Port Blair	6	463
Western Region, Udaipur	9	179
North-western Region, Dehra Dun	16	369
Central Region, Nagpur	36	1396
Sub-Regional Office, Jagdalpur	45	2210
Eastern Region, Calcutta	6	63
Grand Total	261	8679

COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Office and location	No. of ethnic groups	Total no. of negatives	Total no. of colour negatives	Total no. of photo albums
Headquarters Calcutta	89	5906	865	56
North-east Region Shillong	93	8467	210	10
Southern Region Mysore	34	11054	—	12
Andaman & Nicobar Region, Port Blair	9	1789	248	5
Western Region Udaipur	5	819	NA	NA
North-western Region Dehra Dun	26	2450	120	4
Central Region Nagpur	52	9424	809	9
Sub-regional Office	6	439	NA	4
Grand Total	308	40348	2252	100

SYNOPSES OF CINE FILMS PRODUCED BY ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

ABOR OF NEFA (Adi Arunachal) (1954)—Colour. 31 min. projection. 751 ft. 16 FPS. The Abor of Siang Division of NEFA live on the spurs of the Eastern Himalayas. This film describes the life of the Abor women making baskets, weaving colourful skirts and cotton rugs, preparation of local drinks, Mithun sacrifice, ironsmiths at work, funeral procession, dance, etc.

ABOR DANCE (NEFA) (1954)—Colour. 103 metres. 16 FPS. 14 min. projection. Shows the traditional dance of the Abor of Arunachal.

THE ONGE OF LITTLE ANDAMAN ISLAND (1955)—Colour. 51 min. projection. 380 metres. 16 FPS. This film depicts the life of the Onge, a nomadic Negrito tribe of Little Andaman Island. They numbered about 130. They lived off hunting and fishing. The film shows collection of food articles, community hut, fishing, turtle hunting, preparation of food, painting and decoration of body and dance and so on.

GARHWAL HIMALAYA (1955)—Colour. 36 min. projection. 265 metres. 16 FPS. This film is based on the journey to Kedarnath and Badrinath, the famous holy places in the Garhwal Himalayas.

RUPKUND EXPEDITION (1956)—Colour. 38 min. projection. 280 metres. 16 FPS. Rupkund lake is located at an altitude of 16,000 ft. in the high mountains of Garhwal Himalayas. A large number of human skeletons and frozen shattered bodies were recovered by the members of the Survey from the frozen lake of Rupkund. This film covers the entire journey of the expedition from Kathgodam railway station to the mysterious Rupkund lake and gives a vivid picture of the frozen lake.

DUSSERAH FESTIVAL OF MYSORE (1956)—Colour. 12 min. projection. 119 metres 24 FPS. This film illustrates the ceremonial parades starting from the palace and colourful illuminations on Dusserah day at Mysore during the regime of the Maharaja.

SANTINIKETAN (1956)—Colour. 45 min. projection. 335 metres. Santiniketan is situated in the district of Birbhum of West Bengal and is about 160 kilometres from Calcutta. The Visva Bharati University at Santiniketan was founded in 1918 by Rabindranath Tagore. This University has centres for general education, arts, dance, music and a centre for rural construction at Sriniketan. This film has recorded the activities of different centres at Santiniketan and Sriniketan.

THE KHASI OF K & J HILLS (1957)—Colour. 35 min. projection. 386 metres. The film attempts a general survey of different towns and villages in Khasi & Jaintia Hills, including daily activities, dance and music and recreation of the people. Their monoliths, stone cairns, handmade pottery and a local market are also shown in this film.

POTTERS CRAFT OF POONA (1957)—Colour. 24 min. projection. 259 metres. A group of potters known as Khat Kumbhar live in the village of Wagholi near Poona city and manufacture three types of black pottery, two of which are wheel-made and one is handmade. This film shows the techniques of manufacturing black pottery.

THE TEMPLES AND MUTHS OF PURI (1957)—Colour. 23 min. projection. 250 metres. This film is based on the temples and *muths* of Puri district in Orissa.

THE NULIA OF PURI (1967)—Colour. 17 min. projection 186 metres. The Nulia (fisherman group) of Puri in Orissa live on the sea-shore in Puri town. This film portrays their daily life and activities including fishing.

GARO (1957)—Colour. 178 metres. 16 FPS. 16 min. projection. This film records the dance of the Garo wearing their traditional colourful dress. It also shows the dwelling places in the Garo Village.

THE RIANG OF TRIPURA (1959)—Colour. 56 min. projection. 410 meter. 16 FPS. The Riang are a scheduled tribe of Tripura who are said to have migrated from the Shan states of Burma. This

film portrays their daily life, shifting cultivation, rituals, social customs and funeral ceremonies.

ARTS & CRAFTS OF MANBHUM (1959)—Colour. 50 min. projection. 365 metres. 16 FPS. This film is on the crafts of potters, blacksmiths, brass workers (using the lost wax porocess), basketry, mask makers, weavers and oilpress workers of Manbhum. The Chau dance of Manbhum is also recorded in this film.

THE JUANG OF ORISSA (1960)—Colour 57 min. projection. 417 metres 24 FPS. The Juang live in Keonjhar District of Orissa. The film shows hunting, collection of wild roots and tubers, shifting as well as wet cultivation, festivals, communal feasts and dance.

THE GADDI OF HIMACHAL PRADESH (1962)—Colour. 49 min. projection. 504 metres. The Gaddi are a semi-nomadic tribe of Chamba District in Himachal Pradesh who migrate in winter from the higher region and return to fixed villages in summer. Some migrate to Lahaul and to other higher regions of the Himalayan ranges in summer, for grazing their sheep and goats. In this film their village life, agricultural activities, migration to Lahaul with their flock are shown.

THE ASUR OF CHOTANAGPUR (1962)—Colour. 18 min. projection. 192 metres. 16 FPS. Asur, the iron-smelters of Palamau district in Chotanagpur in Bihar have their indigenous process of extracting iron from locally available ore. This film records the techniques of using foot-bellows, constructing blast furnaces, melting iron-ore and fashioning of plough share from iron.

THE KONARAK TEMPLE (1962)—Colour. 8 min. projection. 85 metres. The famous Konarak Temple or the Sun Temple is situated on the sea-shore near Puri in Orissa and is documented in this film.

TEMPLES & CAVES OF BHUBANESHWAR (1962)—Colour. 20 min. projection. 215 metres. This film presents a vivid portrayal of Udaigiri, Khandagiri caves and the Mukteswar, Rajarani and Lingaraj temples of Bhubaneshwar.

THE INSTALLATION CEREMONY OF THE RAJA OF PURI (1962)—
Colour. 8 min. projection. 86 metres. Every year during the
month of Magh (January-February) the coronation of the king
of Puri is performed amid splendour and with a chain of rituals.
The priests who are associated with the temple of Lord Jagan-
nath play an important role in administering the rituals, and the
king is given a golden sacred thread on the occasion. The day's
festivals end with carrying the king in a palanquin in the evening
to the temple of Lord Jagannath.

THE TODA OF NILGIRI HILLS (Tamil Nadu) (1960 & 1965)—
Colour 43 min. projection. 310 metres. 16 FPS. The Toda once
well known as a polyandrous tribe, live in the blue mountains of
South India. The Toda are a pastoral tribe whose economy
centres around tending buffaloes and selling milk and milk pro-
ducts. Their bow and arrow (marriage) ceremony, construction
of huts, funeral ceremony and other activities of their daily life
are delineated in this film.

MONPA—TAWANG (NEFA) (1966)—Colour. 10 min. projection.
114 metres. This film documents the life of the Monpa of
Arunachal their houses, dress, agricultural practices etc.

ARDHA KUMBHA FAIR (1967)—Colour. 22 min. projection. 242
metres. In April, 1968 the Ardha Kumbha fair was held at
Hardwar in Uttar Pradesh. This film documents the assembly
of Sadhus from different organisations, ascetics and the peoples'
myths and beliefs about the holy bath.

THE NICOBARESE OF CAR NICOBAR ISLAND (1967)—Colour. 47
min. projection. 496 metres. The Nicobarese of Car-Nicobar
Island are a Mongoloid people subsisting on trading, hunting
and fishing. The film shows the daily life and activities of the
Nicobarese and the canoe-race, wrestling, dances, pig fight,
fishing and funeral ceremony.

THE LAHAULEE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH (1968)—Colour. 40 min.
projection. 439 metres. The Lahaulee, a scheduled tribe of
Lahaul and Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh, live at an
altitude of about 10,000 ft. The Rohtang pass connects the

Lahaul & Spiti districts with the rest of the country. This high pass closes on account of heavy snowfall to all traffic and this area remains cut off for a period of about six months (November to April). This film depicts the everyday life of the Lahaulee during the summer season and the dances of the Lahaulees, Tibetans and Spitialee.

THE RABARI OF WESTERN GUJARAT (1969)—Colour. 20 min. projection. 214 metres. The Rabari a nomadic tribe, live in the Bardo hills of Jamnagar district in Western Gujarat. Their economic life centres around production and exchange of milk and milk products.

THE SPITIALEE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH (1969)—Colour. 36 min. projection. 384 metres. The Spitialee, a hill tribe of Lahaul and Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh, live at an altitude of about 11,000 ft. Owing to heavy snowfall at the Kunzam pass, this area is isolated from the rest of the country for a period of about nine months. Their daily life, agricultural activities and the devil dance performed by the Lamas of Ki Monastery are recorded in this film.

THE BISON HORN MARIA OF BASTAR (1969)—Colour. 27 min. projection. 282 metres. The Bison Horn Maria of South Bastar in Madhya Pradesh, are distinguished from the other tribes by their splendid head-dress which they use during their dance, live to the south of the Indrawati river of Jagdalpur. Their main source of livelihood is agriculture. Their village surroundings, their daily life activities, the exciting cock-fight and dance are delineated in this film.

THE KINNAUREE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH (1970)—Colour. 37 min. projection. 405 metres. The Kinnauree live in the Kinnaur district, in the high Himalayan ranges of Himachal Pradesh. The border district, Kinnaur, was separated in May 1960 from the former state of Rampur Bushahr. In the Sutlej Valley their main occupation is terraced agriculture, sheep-breeding, weaving, silver and blacksmithy, and carpentry are supplementary. Their daily activities, the Behri Nag, or Bering festival and dances are recorded in this film.

TONS VALLEY EXPEDITION AND GANGOTRI, GOMUKH (1972)— Colour. 33 min. projection. 339 metres. The Tons Valley is situated in the north western part of U.P. in the Garhwal Himalaya. The Rawin, a scheduled caste, live in this area at an altitude of 9,000 ft. They consider Duryodhan & Karna as their patron gods. In this film various facets of their life are recorded as observed during the ASI expedition to Dhumdharkandi pass. The aim was to cross the untrodden Dhumdharkandi and return to Uttarkashi via Gangotri. But owing to premature heavy snowfall the expedition was abandoned after climbing to an altitude of above 18,200 ft. It was risky to move through the narrow tracks. Some idea of blizzards at high altitudes can be formed by seeing this film. The famous pilgrim spots, Gangotri and Gomukh (the source of the Ganges) are also documented at the end of this film.

THE LANJIA SAORA OF ORISSA (1973)—Colour. 29 min. projection. 312 metres. The Saora is one of the most numerous scheduled tribes of India. Their concentration is in Orissa. Though the traditional Saora culture has undergone considerable change in recent years, the Lanjia Saora shown here, are considered one of the most primitive sections of the community. They have retained many of their traditional customs. The source of their livelihood is agriculture and they practise both shifting and wet cultivation. This short film gives a glimpse of the village environment, agricultural activities, domestic life, mortuary practices and dance.

THE ARTS AND CRAFTS OF MANIPUR (1974)—Colour. 28 min. projection. 280 metres. Manipur is known for its crafts, which are either subsidiary to the economy of a region or are its mainstay. Traditions of such crafts have been built up over years. This documentary film presents some of the brilliant pieces of art and craft—their technology and typology. The coverage includes weaving (cotton and silk), blacksmithy, hat-making, pottery (clay and stone), mat weaving and doll making.

THE FESTIVAL OF HEMIS MONASTERY (1975)—Colour. 36 min. projection. 389 metres. The famous Hemis monastery is situated at an altitude of about 12,000 ft. in Ladakh district of

Jammu & Kashmir State. This monastery is the biggest in the north-western part of India. Every year in the month of June the yearly festival of the monastery is observed with pomp. This short film records their yearly festival, its environment and the route to Hemis.

BHUMIJ (1966)—Colour. 29 min. projection. 323 metres. An ethnographic film on the Bhumij of Manbhum district, Bihar.

KAMRUP (1966)—Colour. 35 min. projection. 450 metres. The film portrays the temple of Kamaksha and its surroundings.

THE BIRHOR (1965)—B & W. 35 min. projection. 448 metres. The Birhor, a nomadic tribe, live in Chota Nagpur in Bihar. The mainstay of their economy is making ropes from bark fibre of the Mahulan creeper. The film portrays their daily activities in temporary settlements and hunting, bark collection, bird trapping and rituals.

ONGE OF LITTLE ANDAMAN (1955)—B & W. 11 min. projection. 122 metres. 16 FPS. An ethnographic coverage of the Onge's life and culture.

CULTURAL TRADITION OF BENARES (1960)—38 min. projection. 427 metres. 24 FPS. A film depicting various aspects of traditional culture in Benares.

THE OLARI GADABA OF ORISSA (1966)—B & W. 38 min. projection. 427 metres. The Olari Gadaba live in Koraput district of Orissa. Their economy depends on agriculture. The film covers their daily activities, marriage ceremony and dance.

FISHERMEN OF FRAZERGUNJ (1968)—B & W. 15 min. projection. 189 metres. Depicts the life of the fishermen who migrate from different parts of West Bengal and settle here during the season.

FAIR AT DARRANGA (1966)—B & W. 21 min. projection. 229 metres. Every year in the month of February a fair is held on the banks of Darranga river on the border of Assam and Bhutan. The Bhutanese come to this annual fair to sell their articles

which consist mainly of colourful clothes. They also purchase many articles from the people of the plains. This film records the activities of the Darranga fair.

INLAY CRAFT OF MYSORE (1977)—B & W. 11 min. projection. 122 metres. The inlay craft in Mysore is a traditional art, the entire process of which is described in this film.

SANTAL MARRIAGE (1978)— 22 min. projection. 244 metres. 24 FPS. This film was screened at Santiniketan where a Bengali girl was married to a Santal boy, which was a unique event. The film shows the rituals in a Santal marriage ceremony.

HOOK-SWINGING (CHARAK) FESTIVAL OF SINGHBHUM DISTRICT IN BIHAR (1967)—B & W. 28 min. projection. 305 metres. Hook-swinging (Charak) festival of Singhbhum district is one of the important festivals of the area, which takes place between the last day of the month of Chaitra (March-April) and the last day of the month of Jaistha (May-June). This festival is performed by the villagers on different dates in different villages and continues for five to six days. The central theme of the festival is the worship of Lord Siva. The main features of the festival are the Chau dance, the acrobatic (Natua) dance, and hook-swinging by the devotees who observe penance. This film has recorded all the facets of the festival.

SIDDIS OF GUJARAT (1983)—20 min. projection. 247 metres. 24 FPS. This is the first ASI film with a soundtrack where an ethnographic coverage of the Siddis, a scheduled tribe concentrated in Talala taluka of Junagarh district of Gujarat, has been provided. The pattern of huts, traditional techniques of cultivation, singing and dancing etc., have been covered including the customary rites of "Muharram".

THE CHOLANAIKAN (1985)—30 min. projection. 410 metres. 24 FPS. This is the second film with a soundtrack produced by ASI which hired a professional filmmaker to make a film on the life of the Cholanaikan, one of the few examples of a hunting and food gathering tribe in India living in the jungles of the Nilambur Forest Range in Kerala.

K.N. Sahay

History of Visual Anthropology in India[1]

Visual anthropology is inextricably connected with photography, whether it is still-photographs or films on the life and culture of peoples, that are used for teaching, research, feedback or other applied purposes.

Visual anthropology in India is still in a state of formulation and it has yet to emerge as an organised and effective discipline. One has to go back as early as the end of the last century to understand its genesis. It is linked with the beginning of movie-films in India. Nevertheless, many early film pioneers in the country could very well be said to be the precursors of visual anthropology. Efforts having a bearing on visual anthropology in the beginning have been widely diffused and contributions relevant to it have been made by persons and organisations of diverse backgrounds not necessarily connected with anthropology. However, it is only recently that some people have been forcefully pleading the necessity of developing visual anthropology as a useful discipline, keeping in view the world trend in anthropological studies, and its vast scope in India.

[1] This paper was developed on the basic idea presented in the International Symposium on Visual Anthropology of the Xth ICAES held at Delhi in December, 1978, in the form of a note and is a thoroughly revised and enlarged version of a paper published in *Methodology in Anthropological Filmmaking* (Papers of the IUAES-Intercongress, Amsterdam, 1981), Nico C.R. Bogaart and Henk W.E.R. Ketelaar (Eds.), Edition Herodot, Gottingen, FRG, 1983.

Any attempt to construct a history of visual anthropology in the country will require piecing together of the diffused efforts of early decades and discussion of some important events in recent times that have smoothened the way to the making of visual anthropology in the country.

In India, a number of films, in the beginning, were made by pioneer-photographers and others who did not come from the profession of anthropology though their short films were generally shot on a wide range of real life situations that occurred naturally and were close to ethnographic films. Unwittingly, they were creating an informal tradition of Indian visual anthropology.

Earliest Efforts

Indian films date back to 1896 when the first movie film was shown in the Watson's Hotel in Bombay by the agents of the Lumiere Brothers of France. In the early years, films were mostly documentary and ethnographic in character though obviously they lacked anthropological and methodological sophistication and related to life and culture and some important events in India. A significant development took place when the operators who followed, came with their projectors and cameras often combined into one, and found the scenic grandeur of India a good source to feed their constant need of filmable materials. *Coconut Fair* and *Our Indian Empire*, the latter showing the monuments of Delhi and the famous Imambara Palace of Lucknow, were the first two films of this kind made in 1897 by unknown cameramen and were also perhaps the first documentary films on India. In Calcutta, it was Mr. Stevenson who brought the first 'bioscope' show to the city for the first time in October 1898 at the Star Theatre (Rangoonwala, 1975:12). The same year Mr. Stevenson locally shot items known as *A Panorama of Indian Scenes* including the procession of Parashnath through the streets of Calcutta. At about the same time in Bombay, Mr. Anderson showed some documentaries based on Indian

scenes viz., *Train Arriving at Bombay Station* and *Poona Race '98*. In early 1899, Mr. P.A. Stewart announced some more 'local scenes' in his shows at Trivoli.

The 'first really Indian footage' was canned by Mr. Harischandra S. Bhatvadekar who shot a film on a wrestling bout at Bombay's Hanging Gardens in 1897 entitled *The Wrestlers*. Another short was made by him which showed some monkeys being trained by their master. In 1900, a film was shown in Bombay named *Fatima, an Indian Dancer*.

In the middle of 1900, Mr. F.B. Thanawalla made a film *Taboot Procession* which covered the annual pageant of the Muslims as it passed through the busy Kalbadevi roads. In 1903, Hiralal Sen of Calcutta presented a series of his films called *Indian Life and Scenes*. These films included scenes of Indian domestic life besides events from Indian history and Hindu mythology.

In 1906, the Elphinstone Company produced several shorts viz. *Grand Parashnath Procession, Bathing Ghat of Howrah, Goat Sacrifice at Kalighat, Dancing of Indian Nautch Girls*, and *Grand Masonic Procession*. At about the same time the Paris Cinematograph showed films on *Scenes of Native Life in India* which included the *Malabarese, Charming Snakes, Juggling a Girl* and *Dancing*, though the names of the filmmakers, however, remain unknown.

In 1910, the Excelsior Cinematograph of Bombay made a coverage of the annual Muslim Festival of Muharram in Delhi. *Fugitive Dalai Lama* was another special attraction, which is of special historical significance now, showing the Tibetan leader's flight from the Chinese to seek protection in the then British Indian territory and the big reception given to him. In 1911-'12, the coming of George V to India and the Delhi Darbar attracted the attention of many filmmakers who covered the various events connected with the Darbar.

Films were also made relating to some aspects of feudal life in India viz., *Marriage of a Maharaja* shown in 1911,

Coronation of Maharaja Holkar at Indore filmed by Gaumont and the Excelsior Cinematograph, coverages of a garden party to Sir Shapurji Broacha, all shown in 1912. In about the same year a film, *Benaras* or *Kashi* depicting the scenes of religious life in the sacred city of the Hindus, was made by an unknown cameraman and shown at the American-Indian Theatre. Another short depicted the *The Ganpati Festival*, exclusively photographed for Cinema de Lux (Rangoonwala, 1975; Roberge, 1974: 140; Srivastava, n.d.).

In the years which followed, Indian film industry made rapid growth. The talkie cinema came into being on 14th March, 1931, when *Alam Ara*, the first Indian talkie feature produced by Ardeshir M. Irani, was released at the Majestic, Bombay (Kak, 1980:5) and themes of films shifted from short and documentary films depicting situations and events from real life to Indian classics, religious and mythological aspects of Indian culture, historical events, reformistic themes or those made for pure entertainment. Under the impact of western culture films based on themes of war and propaganda also inspired governmental and private agencies.

Documentation Becomes Meaningful

A systematic and more meaningful history of ethnographic films or documentaries with an ethnographic bias relating to glimpses of life and culture of Indian people, however, did not start until India gained freedom in 1947 when a National Government was formed and an urgent necessity was felt to project the rich cultural heritage of India through the medium of short films. The Films Division, Government of India, under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting came into existence in 1948. "With an annual target of 157 short films and a weekly national news review, Films Division is the world's largest single short film unit. Out of the 157 films, about 50 are produced for the Defence and Agriculture ministries; the

remainder cover miscellaneous subjects. The films for general release are dubbed in 15 languages, and distributed in the country's 11,000 theatres to a weekly audience of some 60 million" (Tandava,1983:62). So far, over 4,000 films have been produced. These documentary films relate to a broad range of themes. Of all these films, those coming under the categories of 'Biographies', 'Arts', 'Festivals', 'People of India', and 'Experimental films' are of special interest and relevant to the present context. The Films Division has compiled a voluminous catalogue of its films made between the years 1949-72 and some other catalogues of selected films from time to time.

Besides the Films Division of the Government of India, a number of state governments have also produced several short films through their Departments of Information, Publicity or Public Relations. Such documentary films of the Governments of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal, Manipur, Tripura, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Himachal Pradesh may specially be mentioned in this connection, which show dances, festivals, arts and crafts, economic life and vocations, historical events or the nature of cultural change among the tribal or non-tribal peoples of the respective states.

By and large, the films of the Government of India and the state governments mentioned above have a running time between 10 to 30 minutes. They are too short to depict a complete or systematic picture of even a single aspect of life and thus lack scientific precision. Nevertheless, they give us some glimpses of life and are in some measure important visual documents of culture.

Some private agencies like Burmah-Shell, India, planned and produced 40 half-hour documentary films between 1954-'68 for Burmah-Shell Oil Company, with Indian Production Units for distribution in various language versions within India. Among those which are of special interest, mention may be made of the series on village life in Travancore, West Bengal and East Punjab.

Other series relate to family life in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, and the life of weavers, tanners, martial dancers, Oraons, fishermen, etc.

A significant development took place in the field of ethnographic films when the Anthropological Survey of India of the Government of India took up this task and has produced under the supervision of anthropologists, more than 40 ethnographic films since 1954. These films cover a wide range of communities, regions and aspects of Indian life. Out of the total, 37 films are in Kodachrome (colour). The running time of these films varies between 8 minutes to 57 minutes, though in the majority of the cases they are of more than 30 minutes duration. These films mainly relate to the life of tribal communities from different parts of India viz., the Abor, Onge, Nicobarese, Khasi, Riang, Juang, Toda, Gaddi, Asur, Birhor, Olari Gadaba, Bison Horn Maria, Rabari, Monpa, Garo, Lanjia Saora and Cholanaikan, Lahaulees and Spitialees. Besides, they also cover arts and crafts, and festivals and fairs of different parts of India. All these films are without sound though in recent years efforts have been made to produce films with sound.

Some of the Tribal or Cultural Research Institutes started by state governments in the early Fifties, especially in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, have made some ethnographic films relating to the life of some of the tribal communities in their respective states.

It is of interest, that several universities in the United States, Europe and elsewhere offer courses on South Asia with the help of ethnographic films produced either by foreign anthropologists or independent agencies who have been working in India or in collaboration with Indian counterparts. Here mention may be made of the Department of South Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison, State University (New York) and others. The former made a film series called *Contemporary South Asia*. The State University of New York by an arrangement

with James Beveridge Associates produced a series of biographic films on *Music of North India*. The 5th edition of *Films for Anthropological Teaching* published by the American Anthropological Association (Heider, 1972) includes in its list half a dozen interesting films on India, on the Ganges, a mountain community, north Indian village life, Tibetan traders and other similar topics.

One of the recent films to be mentioned in this context is *The Ho: The People of the Rice Pot* (70 minutes) by Dr. Michael Yorke of London. This is an in-depth ethnographic film backed by data sheets for classroom discussion and analysis. Margaret C. Fairlie of Ithaca College, New York, directed and edited two films, *Tribal Groups of Central India: Lifeway, Ceremony, Dance* in 1971-'72 which present a unique educational contribution in which ceremonial rites and dances of four tribal and caste populations are depicted against the exotic backgrounds of their contrasting ways of life, economics and ecological settings.

Interaudiovisual (1980), an official organisation in France, in its list of ethnographic films published in 1980 mentions nearly a dozen ethnographic films on India produced since 1965 by a number of French agencies like SERDAV, S. Genevoix, Les Films De L'adagio, INA and CNRS. These films relate to the Ganges, Pushkar, a Buddhist village, boatmen, dances, singers and ballads. The Encyclopaedia Cinematographica (Wolf, 1977: 174-77) published by the Institut fur den Wissenschaftlichen Film, Gottingen, also lists a number of ethnographic films from India on the Bhil, Baiga, Toda, Kond, Hindus, life in Mithila (North Bihar), Nagas and others.

Besides these films, some professional film directors also, either on their own initiative or sponsored by others, have from time to time produced or directed documentaries or films of ethnographic interest on India. Paul Zeals, a German, directed a film *Our India* sometime in the mid-fifties which not only showed glimpses of contemporary life in India but depicted a few scenes from Indian history as well. Roberto Rosellini, the famous Italian director

came to India in the late fifties and made an abortive at-
tempt to produce *India*. Satyajit Ray made a documentary
on the life of the Sikkimese people. Other names come to
mind in this connection. Documentaries of ethnographic
interest were made by K.A. Abbas, Sukhdev, Shyam
Benegal, Mani Kaul from Bombay and Barindranath
Saha, Sushil Karan, Tarun Mazumdar, Ashish Mukherjee
and Harisadhan Das Gupta from Calcutta. This list is
not, of course, exhaustive (Sahay, 1978).

Thus, in the light of the facts relating to the develop-
ment of ethnographic films in India as mentioned above,
it may be said that since the end of the last century when
the technique of cinematography was imported to India
by the agents of Lumiere Brothers of France and used for
making short films of documentary and ethnographic
character, several isolated attempts have been made by
different persons and organizations coming from different
backgrounds or those connected with anthropology to
make meaningful documentary and ethnographic films.
However, such materials are widely scattered and the ef-
forts which have so far gone into the making of such films
lack coordination, system and a 'convergent point' on the
national level which are necessary for the systematic
growth of a discipline. Many people interested in the mak-
ing of such films do not know about others engaged in the
same field, or how their films could be made available.
Many films of the early pioneers also seem to have been
'lost' or may be lying at unknown places in precarious
conditions due to lack of proper facilities or knowledge
about preservation. Again, there is lack of proper techni-
cal knowledge on the part of many persons who want to
make such films. Besides, visual anthropology is a costly
proposition and non-availability of funds is still another
big hurdle in the making of ethnographic films.

India Honoured by an International Body

Against this background, a very significant development

took place in the field of visual anthropology in India when the IUAES nominated an Indian to act as the Co-chairman of the International Commission on Visual Anthropology, 1973-78. In this instance, it was the author who was given the honour. The Co-chairman convened a preliminary meeting of the Commission[3] at Ranchi in February, 1977, which besides its Chairman and other members from Japan (Masao Oka, Chairman, Junichi Ushiyama, Member; Yasuko Ichioka, Member) and France (Marielle Delorme who represented Jean Rouch) was attended by L.P. Vidyarthi, President, IUAES (1973-78) and ICAES (1978) as a guest participant.

This meeting discussed matters relating to cooperation with other organizations connected with ethnographic films, substantial financial support for the activities of the Commission, the necessity of making on an urgent basis, a catalogue of Bibliographies of Ethnographic films, and the production of ethnographic films on themes specially relating to Third World countries like India. It was also decided to hold a symposium on visual anthropology and an exhibition of ethnographic films during the Xth ICAES at New Delhi. Dr. Sahay left no stone unturned to organise the Symposium on behalf of the Commission. The Co-chairman also visited Tokyo and Paris in 1977 at the invitation of Dr. Masao Oka, the Chairman of the Commission, and Nippon Audio-Visual Productions (NAV), Tokyo, Japan, and Dr. Jean Rouch, General Secretary, CIFH, Paris respectively.

The Commission had also felt that nearly two dozen different committees and organizations connected with ethnographic films throughout the world had prepared their respective Indices of Ethnographic Films. Under the circumstances what was needed most was the making of a Bibliography of all Indices of films. Dr. Jean Rouch of

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[3] A detailed report of this meeting of the Commission on Visual Anthropology held at Ranchi was published in *Review of Ethnology*, Newsletter No. 2, 1977-'78, pp. 203-206.

Musee de l'Homme, Paris, was requested to take up this task through his organization while Mr. Junichi Ushiyama of NAV Tokyo, and another member of the Commission, were requested to prepare an Index of Ethnographic Films on Asia and Oceania. Dr. Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein of Vienna, another member of the Commission and Chairman of the Commission on Urgent Anthropology strongly pleaded for cooperation between the two Commissions and consequently published a few notes in her Newsletter relevant to those interested in visual anthropology. Dr. Sahay also took up the matter of preservation under proper conditions of the valuable ethnographic films of the Anthropological Survey of India, the necessity of putting sound to these films, availability of their copies to other institutions and researchers and developing this wing under the guidance of a senior anthropologist of the ASI as its Director and some officials of the Department of Culture, Ministry of Education.

International Symposium in Delhi

Subsequently, a definite advance in this field was made when the plan materialized and a five-day International Symposium on Visual Anthropology was organized at Delhi, in December, 1978, on behalf of the Commission on Visual Anthropology.

The Symposium was a great success. In addition to the Symposium, there was a screening of some three dozen ethnographic films for participants in the Xth ICAES. Marielle Delorme of Paris organized this programme at Vigyan Bhavan, the main venue of the ICAES, on behalf of the Commission. The Symposium was attended by delegates from ten countries namely Japan, Korea, Tunisia, Australia, France, Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, Canada, U.S.A. and India. It consisted of seven sessions where a number of papers and ethnographic films were presented and discussed.

This Symposium was the first organized activity in India relating to visual anthropology on a country-wide

as well as international level, which will hopefully go a
long way in shaping the future of visual anthropology in
India. For India, this event may be considered an impor-
tant landmark in the history of the development of visual
anthropology, where, among other things, possibilities
were explored to ensure international cooperation to de-
velop visual anthropology with special reference to Third
World countries and an emphasis was laid on establishing
a global network of regional and national centres in visual
anthropology to coordinate the filming, indexing, educa-
tional, archival, and research activities required. Besides,
it created a deeper interest in enthnographic filming
among a section of young anthropologists, other scholars
and amateur filmmakers and inspired them to explore the
rich propsect of ethnographic films in India.

Keeping the deliberations of the International Seminar
in mind, the author, Dr. K.N. Sahay, initiated the publi-
cation of the *Visual Anthropology Bulletin*, containing news
relating to ethnographic films and small articles. It has
been edited and published by K.N. Sahay since June,
1979. An Association for Visual Anthropology is also in
the process of being set up.

On the last day of the Symposium the following resolu-
tions were adopted:

> Whereas the increasingly rapid loss of cultural
> variety in the world has intensified the need to
> prepare permanent researchable, illustrative re-
> cords of vanishing ways of life and culture; and
> Whereas the visual potential of film makes it well
> suited to presenting and preserving multicultural
> viewpoints in records of human heritage; and
> whereas humanistic film studies heighten national
> and international awareness of the needs of ethnic
> groups by presenting in accessible and under-
> standable form, information vital to their social,
> cultural, and political life.
>
> For these reasons it is resolved:
>
> 1. That the Resolution on Visual Anthropology

passed at the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Chicago, September, 1973, be hereby reaffirmed and emphasized.

2. That film studies be undertaken which go beyond the particular belief system of a single culture to present multicultural viewpoints.

3. That new kinds of humanistically oriented centres be created to take advantage of the multicultural potential of the visual media for furthering human understanding.

4. That the technologically advanced nations be encouraged to lend resources, training and effort to developing nations, particularly those with broad independent cultural traditions, to develop local talent and expertise in visual anthropology.

5. That, since much of anthropology is in the Western cultural traditions, a new type of humanistic orientation be developed in which the nonverbal potential of film is employed in cross-cultural studies and documentation.

6. That freer international movement of educational, cultural, and scientific film materials be encouraged.

7. That a joint international commission on ethnographic film and urgent anthropology be formed to bring together from time to time the existing Commission on Urgent Anthropology and the Commission on Visual Anthropology.

8. That, in pursuit of the goals delineated above, a global network of regional and national centres in visual anthropology be established to coordinate the filming, indexing, educational, archival, and research activities required.

The Task Ahead

India is a plural society. In every sphere there is

heterogeneity; geographical, racial, economic, linguistic, religious or cultural. It has a rich variety of culture ranging from that of pre-farming and folk communities to complex urban and industrial societies. One can find here societies which represent all the stages in the evolutionary process of cultural development. There are tribal groups as primitive as cave-dwellers, hunters, food-gatherers or shifting agriculturists. On the other hand, some of the groups are so acculturated that they have completely taken to an urban and sophisticated way of life. A large variety of caste, creed and religious groups along with rural and urban styles of life and a wide range of ecological settings which helped to develop different shades of culture, present still other dimensions of Indian life and civilization. Indian civilization itself has an orthogenetic growth with a very long history stretching over 5000 years, and unity amidst diversity has been one of its basic characteristics. A host of religious centres situated in different parts of the country, the institution of pilgrimage and the religious intelligentsia connected with it who take religious tours to different parts of the country and make the masses aware of its rich religious and cultural heritage, foster a sense of unity amidst elements of heterogeneity. This element of heterogeneity and diversity of landscape promises such a vast scope for visual anthropology that whatever work has been done so far in this field, seems negligible.

In view of the foregoing discussions, there are a number of tasks before us which must be accomplished on an urgent basis to develop visual anthropology in this country. They are being discussed as follows.

The first and the foremost need of the hour is a stock-taking exercise by locating the various persons and organizations from India and abroad which have been connected with the making of ethnographic and relevant documentary films in the past and the present time, collect the details of such films, evaluate their quality, class-

ify them meaningfully and index them scientifically to make it useful to the students and researchers of visual anthropology, planners or others interested in them.

Some of the organisations viz., Anthropological Survey of India, various Research Institutes, Public Relations Departments of state governments, Films Division and the like, have their own catalogues of films. It would be necessary to make an annotated bibliography of all such catalogues of films. The documentary films of organisations or individuals not connected with anthropology should be scrutinized carefully and only those films should be selected which are ethnographic in nature and have relevance to anthropology.

Locating the documentary films, specially of our early pioneers in the silent era as mentioned earlier, may be a very difficult task; they might have been completely destroyed or forgotten or been stored badly. One has to know about them, retrieve them and preserve them under proper conditions for the sake of visual anthropology.

There are several communities living in precarious conditions in different parts of the country as a result of the negative forces of modernity they gave been exposed to, or the change in the ecological balance which they are experiencing. Their customs and practices are fast changing. This change in their economic environment and consequent adaptations which many of the tribes, specially connected with forests and hills have been forced to make, as a result of ecological imbalance and new forest legislations but with very poor results, have really created human problems. Some of these tribes like Onge, Little Andamanese, Shompen and Jarwa are even threatened with cultural and physical extinction. In view of this we are faced with the proverbial question of 'now or never' and visual anthropology has to act fast by making a list of priorities for the purpose of filming such communities.

It has already been said that visual anthropology has still to take shape in our country and so far attempts made

in this field are highly diffused. Among others, one of the important reasons for this has been information-gaps among the people who have either worked in this field or are interested in it. Those with necessary resources and potential to contribute to this might benefit from these pioneering efforts. Also, anthropologists who lack knowledge of cinematography or vice versa might find this dissemination of information relating to ethnographic films, technical or otherwise, helpful. They would also come into contact with individuals connected with ethnographic films, significant developments in the field and the funds earmarked for it.

All the above mentioned needs can be met by establishing on an urgent basis a National Centre of Audio-Visual Data with a network of five zonal sub-centres in different parts of the country.

The Audio-Visual Data Centre should be geared to the need of documenting visually "the remaining variety of the culturally patterned human behaviour in the world which reflects diverse, sometimes unique, expressions of basic human potential" on the one hand, and emerging developments in societies that lead to modernization on the other (Executive Commitee, 1978:2).

The aduio-visual materials will help us to study the non-verbal communities and 'body language'. Such materials may also serve as a scientific tool allowing the repeated examination of movement and behaviour, segmented into regular units and slowed down for micro-analysis as developed by American scholars in their film-analysis, like Gregory Bateson, Ray Birdwhistell, Edward Hall, Alan Lomax, Margaret Mead and others (Ibid.).

> We need better understanding of how man fits into, and copes with, the world and its transformations, including those he himself generates. These newer technologically based ways of life change perhaps even more rapidly than do isolated cultures. Our incomplete understanding of

the dynamics of such change, or its socio-biological significance, frequently forces us to make uninformed and arbitrary decisions about its direction. Movement into the future would be less traumatic and more adaptive if we had greater understanding" (Sorenson, 1975: 463).

Sorenson (Ibid. p.p. 473-74) talks of four basic functions of such an Audio-Visual Data Centre:

(*i*) *Repository and Archiving*: which will store and preserve film records of man's varied ways of life; maintain facilities and equipment to locate, view, and abstract specific kinds of visual data from the collections; and provide a means to duplicate sequences needed for research and educational projects;

(*ii*) *Acquisitional*: which will undertake and support programmes to document vanishing cultures and changing patterns of human behaviour and encourage production of visual documents; accept gifts of films for deposit; copy undeposited original films before they are edited; and purchase endangered prints of early films;

(*iii*) *Research*: which will support the scientific study of various ethnographic and 'research films',[4] under possession; promote studies of various filming approaches; and support studies to increase the potential of film as a scientific and humanistic resource;

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[4] 'The research film method provides identified and annotated visual records useful for continued study and use. These visual records are unedited and not in themselves films in the usual sense: there is no attempt in them to present a coherent statement or point of view. Not designed to demonstrate a conclusion or to impose preconceived ideas, they are intended to facilitate review and study of passing, naturally occurring phenomena. They are not constructed to conform to the aesthetic models of our age or to present worked out concepts. Rather they are designed to serve as information potential: they are ordered and annotated—but not edited, rearranged, or abstracted. Thus the name, *research film*' (Chanock & Sorenson, 1975:432).

(*iv*) *Education*: which will support and conduct seminars, training fellowships, workshops, etc. in the visual documentation of changing culture and human behaviour; support the production of educational materials from holdings; and support studies of new ways to use visual materials in education.

The heterogeneity of visual data in India, the complexity of its culture and civilization and the richness of its religious and philosophical traditions provide ample scope to research and experiment in the visual presentation of anthropological materials. *Lost Child* and *Trip*, the two films made by Jagat Murari and Pramod Pati, respectively, of the Films Division, Government of India, are symbolic presentations of certain philosophical thoughts and may be mentioned in this connection (Visual Anthropology Bulletin, 1980:1). *Duvidha* (Dilemma) directed by Mani Kaul and based upon a Rajasthani folk tale dealing with spirit possession and exorcism is another significant film to be mentioned here which opens a new vista in cultural studies as it enacts a folk tale in a distinctive style.

The Data Centre will aslo work as a liason agency between the government and the persons or organisation interested in making films relevant to our context.

The Centre will assume a greater importance if it also acts as a storehouse of relevant information and disseminates all kinds of information pertaining to visual anthropology in this country and elsewhere through published materials at Seminars and Symposia, or newsletters, bulletins and journals. Several other dimensions of ethnographic filming may also be explored by the Audio-Visual Data Centre.

Incidentally, it may be of interest to note that films have a commercial side as well and an international market. Besides the functions delineated above, it may be commercially exploited which could gradually create requisite funds to enrich the Data Centre.

Films have a great feedback[5] value and it should be fully utilized in this respect. It has been observed that 'lack of knowledge about others' culture often breeds misunderstanding while a knowledge of it promotes mutual appreciation and trust among the people. It would be a useful idea to telecast a regular series of films about the different peoples of India coming from different parts of the country which will foster a sense of mutual understanding, mutual appreciation and integration on a national level among the heterogeneous communities living in India who know so little about each other. Such films aiming at a vivid presentation of different aspects of life of a community may be of one hour's duration and could be shown once or twice a week on Indian television.

Another film series with a comparative, cross-cultural treatment of subjects of universal interest and importance may also be produced and telecast depicting the cultural universals like rites-de-passage, economy, religion, dances, crafts and the like. Besides, a number of films carefully made on the life and problems of the tribals may specially be addressed to these people. Such films may serve a useful purpose by radiating new ideas and insights among the people and be an important source of 'controlled change' in the desired direction for the tribals. These films would also be useful to the planners and administrators of our country and enable them to have a better understanding of the needs of communities or people they work for.

Another important task to be accomplished on an urgent basis is to introduce various 'video booths' in our Museums on the pattern of the National Museum of

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[5] Jean Rouch (1975:100) has to say the following about feedback: This extraordinary technique of feedback (which I translate as audiovisual counter-gift) has certainly not yet revealed all of its possibilities, but we can see already that, thanks to feedback, the anthropologist is no longer an entomologist observing his subject as if it were an insect (putting it down) but rather as if it were a stimulant for mutual understanding (hence dignity)."

Ethnology at Osaka, Japan known as *Videotheque in Museum*, which are used by the visitors to see ethnographic films of their choice on the life and culture of different ethnic communities from different parts of the world. The Japanese Museum provides a system with recorded movies regarding all ethnic groups of the world, stored in video cassette tapes. This special museum is composed of 37 video booths, and a control room containing a small computer, automatic video cassette tape players, shelves for video tapes, special robots and so on (Omori, 1978:1). Such video booths in Indian Museums will have a two-fold utility. Firstly, it will help the visitors to know more and more in a fascinating manner about other peoples of their own country and the world. It will thus help to develop a feeling of national integration, or human understanding for other peoples in general. Secondly, it will work as an important tool of anthropological research.

The vastness of the field in India is not matched by resources, and indeed, there is hardly any money for ethnographic filming available in the country. It calls for priorities to be fixed in terms of geographical areas least covered, the communities still untouched, and from the angle of the aspects of culture changing fast owing to the impact of modern forces. It also implies a phased programme for ethnographic filming in India. A comprehensive filming programme has to be carefully evolved which would include all representative communities of the country and the various facets of Indian life. Here one has also to keep in mind programmes relating to specific aspects of life evolved elsewhere which need cross-cultural visual data from different parts of the world. The *Visual Anthropology Bulletin* published from Ranchi as mentioned earlier, performed this task of stocktaking of ethnographic films on India, and hopefully, it will be in a position to work out the areas of priority and a comprehensive phased programme of ethnographic filming in due course.

The objective can be fulfilled by locating interested an-

thropologists, other individual scholars and filmmakers with anthropological insight, institutions, and government officials from all over the country who are interested in ethnographic filmmaking and by forming a National Committee with zonal offices in other parts of the country which would provide an infrastructure of experts and other personnel connected with visual anthropology and work in close collaboration with the Audio-Visual Data Centre. This National Committee may pursue the matter with Central and state governments, specially the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Films Division, and Public Relations Departments and create an awareness for the promotion of ethnographic films by requisitioning the services of visual anthropologists. The various Tribal and Welfare Research Institutes of the state governments and the Departments of Anthropology in various Universities of the country can also contribute significantly to ethnographic filming. Some of them have audio-visual wings with cine-cameramen but which either figure low in financial priority of the institution concerned or are not functioning because of lack of adequate technical know-how or lack of interest in the realization of the potentialities of ethnographic film in teaching and research of anthropology or other social science disciplines.

Apart from this, the various Departments of Anthropology in different Indian universities should take up the challenge and introduce the teaching of visual anthropology as a part of their curriculum.[6] 'It will help to popularise the subject and go a long way in serving the cause of visual anthropology in the country. There has been an apathetic attitude towards this subject, but it has to be removed and the new generation of teachers should come forward and plead the case.

A special provision of fellowship and scholarships for

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[6] See *Visual Anthropology Bulletin*, K.N. Sahay (ed.), Vol. III No. 2, 1981 for a model curriculum in Visual Anthropology for Indian Universities.

the students of visual anthropology may also be made to encourage the subject. Besides Indian universities, the National Committee or the Audio-Visual Data Centre may also award such fellowships to students or others interested in this field.

It is significant to mention that of late the government has also realized the necessity of promoting 'film culture' on the campus and in 1984 the UGC came up with a proposal to establish Film Societies in Indian Universities (Khanna, 1984: 1-9). Besides, it is heartening to note that the universities have started taking interest in films and Bangalore University is the first to introduce a short course in film appreciation (Bahadur, 1976: 106). Such developments are likely to have a favourable result and may directly or indirectly strengthen the cause of visual anthropology in India.

So far, the filmmaking wing of the Anthropological Survey of India, with its headquarters at Calcutta but with other stations located throughout the country and considered to be the biggest anthropological institution in the world in terms of its extension and spread, has been the major producer of ethnographic films. But unfortunately, this important wing has been virtually a one man affair—functioning under its cine-cameraman—the only technical person. Of course, the cine-cameraman has been working in association with the anthropologists of the ASI, but he alone has been responsible for shooting, editing and processing the films entirely and other technical aspects of filmmaking. To make proper use of its potentiality, the ASI can strengthen this wing by appointing an anthropologist of the rank of a Deputy Director who has an orientation and personal interest in filmmaking besides some other trained subordinate anthropologists.

It would be relevant to mention here that the Nippon Audio-Visual Productions of Tokyo at the initiative of Mr. Junichi Ushiyama has been organizing the Tokyo Festival of 8 mm. films every year since 1973 in coopera-

tion with the Japanese Television Network and newspapers as a popular movement to encourage more and more Japanese to film the life and traditional culture of Japan (Visual Anthropology Bulletin, 1979:11). Mr. Junichi Ushiyama, who organizes this festival, told the author that he has met with tremendous success. Something similar can be conceived in relation to India and such film festivals may be organized by the National Committee on an all-India as well as a zonal basis which would help locate talent, and at the same time add to the body of visual data on India. Talented persons can be further stimulated to take up visual anthropology as a vocation. It may be mentioned here that an effort to organize an all-India festival of short films of amateur filmmakers has already been made by the Students' Association of the Film and Television Institute of India, Poona (Visual Anthropology Bulletin, 1981:7).

So far native communities have been studied and filmed by outsiders. But under the fast changing circumstances, it would be worthwhile to train native talents and initiate them in visual anthropology to make ethnographic films on their own culture. Methodologically, it would be significant to note the difference of perspective between our own conception of the native culture and an insider's conception and projection of it as reflected in ethnographic films. Secondly, films on the life of non-native communities coming from the mainstream of society should be encouraged with a view to promote understanding of our own culture.

Another area which needs to be explored under visual anthropology is the 'New Wave', 'Art' or 'realistic' fiction films being produced in India (as also elsewhere) for the last few decades. The films of Satyajit Ray (*Pather Panchali*), Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal (*Nishant, Ankur, Manthan, Kondura*), Sathyu (*Garam Hava*), Mani Kaul and a host of others may be mentioned in this connection. It is felt that when we talk about ethnographic films, besides the short

films exposed on real life situations and events which occur naturally and spontaneously, we may also include, under a separate subheading, those films which are not pure fiction but in a considerable measure, present a faithful and vivid depiction of the typical lifestyle, problems and the events connected with a particular cross-section of society and which can be ethnographically and anthropologically useful[7].

Here it may be noted that such films influence society in two ways: materially and non-materially. On the material level films influence the fashion, dress and decorations, manners, etiquette, style of living, crime pattern and material equipment. But the influence works more powerfully on the non-material aspects of life viz., belief and value systems, ideals, attitudes, levels of aspiration, horizons of knowledge, awareness of the various situations etc. and even though it relates to the realm of ideas and is as such subtle, it is significant, for any real change in the society must be preceded by an ideological change. But here, it is significant to note, that, besides being agents of change films also reinforce some of our basic traditional norms and values and can be used for upholding them. They can also prove effective instruments of cultural revitalization.

The students of the Film and Television Institute of India, Poona, and a similar Institute of Film Technology at Madras which provide courses in Acting, Motion Picture Photography, Film Processing and Film Editing, have to make diploma films at the completion of their courses. Some of these students may be encouraged to make ethnographic or relevant documentary films.

The magnitude of work, however, which lies before us also calls for international cooperation especially in matters relating to the technical, organizational and financial aspects of the endeavour in Third World countries. Here

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[7] K.N. Sahay, 'Visual Anthropology and Indian Fiction Films'.

one is reminded of some of the resolutions adopted at the meeting of the Commission on Visual Anthropology held at Delhi in 1978 and referred to earlier which envisaged that 'a new kind of humanistically oriented centre be created to take advantage of the multicultural potential of the visual media for furthering human understanding', 'the technologically advanced nations be encouraged to lend resources, training, and effort to developing nations particularly those with broad independent cultural traditions to develop local talent and expertise in visual anthropology', and the necessity of a "global network of regional and national centres in visual anthropology be established to coordinate the filming, indexing, educational, archival, and research activities required". It is high time that we see that such resolutions no longer remain confined to just paperwork but sincere efforts are made to implement them in the larger interest of the global community of visual anthropologists. The Commission on Visual Anthropology of the IUAES which is itself an international body, or those immediately connected with it, should look into it and pursue the matter, so that it leads to fruitful results.

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Rakhi Roy and Jayasinhji Jhala

Perceptions of the Self and Other in Visual Anthropology

This paper addresses the issue of identity and recognition in ethnographic film. The identity of the researcher filmmaker involves the recognition of multiple factors that interact in the making of the final film. These factors often involve the background of the filmmakers, their education, their relationship to the culture studied, their obligations to the sponsors, the expectations of the academic tradition they are a part of and finally their perceptions of the usefulness of their work for the people their film attempts to represent. The conceptual tools predict the nature of the product and binds the filmmaker to a particular path of enquiry.

To discuss the issue of identity and recognition in ethnographic film also means dealing with the concept of the 'self' (filmmaker) and the 'other' (those fimed). Though there has been much interest about the role and perception of the 'self' and the 'other' in anthropological literature, there has been little or no discussion on this issue by ethnographic filmmakers. Regardless of the fact as to who the film is for, the ethnographic film becomes possible only by the contact established between the filmmaking team and the persons filmed. When the *self (filmmaker)* encounters the *other* (those filmed) what sort of relationship takes place? What is the nature of this *self* and

this *other*? What is their identity in context with each other and the recognition conferred by the one on the other? The process of film enquiry is an interpretation of this relationship between the filmmaker (*self*) and those filmed (*other*).

In this paper three specific film-encounters regarding the '*self*' and the '*other*' are examined:

(1) Filmmakers as aliens in an ethnically different population from

(2) Filmmakers as co-residents of one district, but different from those

(3) Filmmakers as investigators of their own family.

In (1) the level of knowledge pre-empts the possibility that can be had in (2) and (3). Each is a successive and encompassing stage. It is possible to do a (1) type of film with (3) type of access but not the reverse. All three examples deal with film ethnographies from India.

To understand the three case studies mentioned above, it is important to define the filmmakers identity of the *self* and recognition of the *other*. In our case, (which could be the path known by other investigators too) the self is an evolved consciousness gained through lived experiences, incorporating a trajectory of varied and cumulative life-episodes, best illustrated by the picture of multiple orbits ramifying from a point of origin as shown in diagram A.

There is a definite additive and assimilative progression from centre to periphery, the passing of each station in the outword journey adding to the complexity of the *self's* dialogue between stations. All experienced stations are in constant contact in the mind of the filmmaker. This *self* starts at the innermost station, the circle which represents a rural and traditional experience, widens to that of the urban and provincial identity, thereafter to the urban and national, further widening to the west and the Third World. These three categories are not in restricted exchange but should be seen as a part of a total communication system, influencing and being influenced by each other at all times. (S.F. Moore, p. 254-256, 1983).

JHALAS   STATIONS

Development of
SELF

4	3	2	1

┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 1. Traditional   │
│   Rural Gujarati   │
└─────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 2. Provincial   │
│   Urban Gujarati   │
└─────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 3. National Hindi   │
│   Urban English   │
└─────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 4. Global   │
│   International English│
└─────────────────────────┘
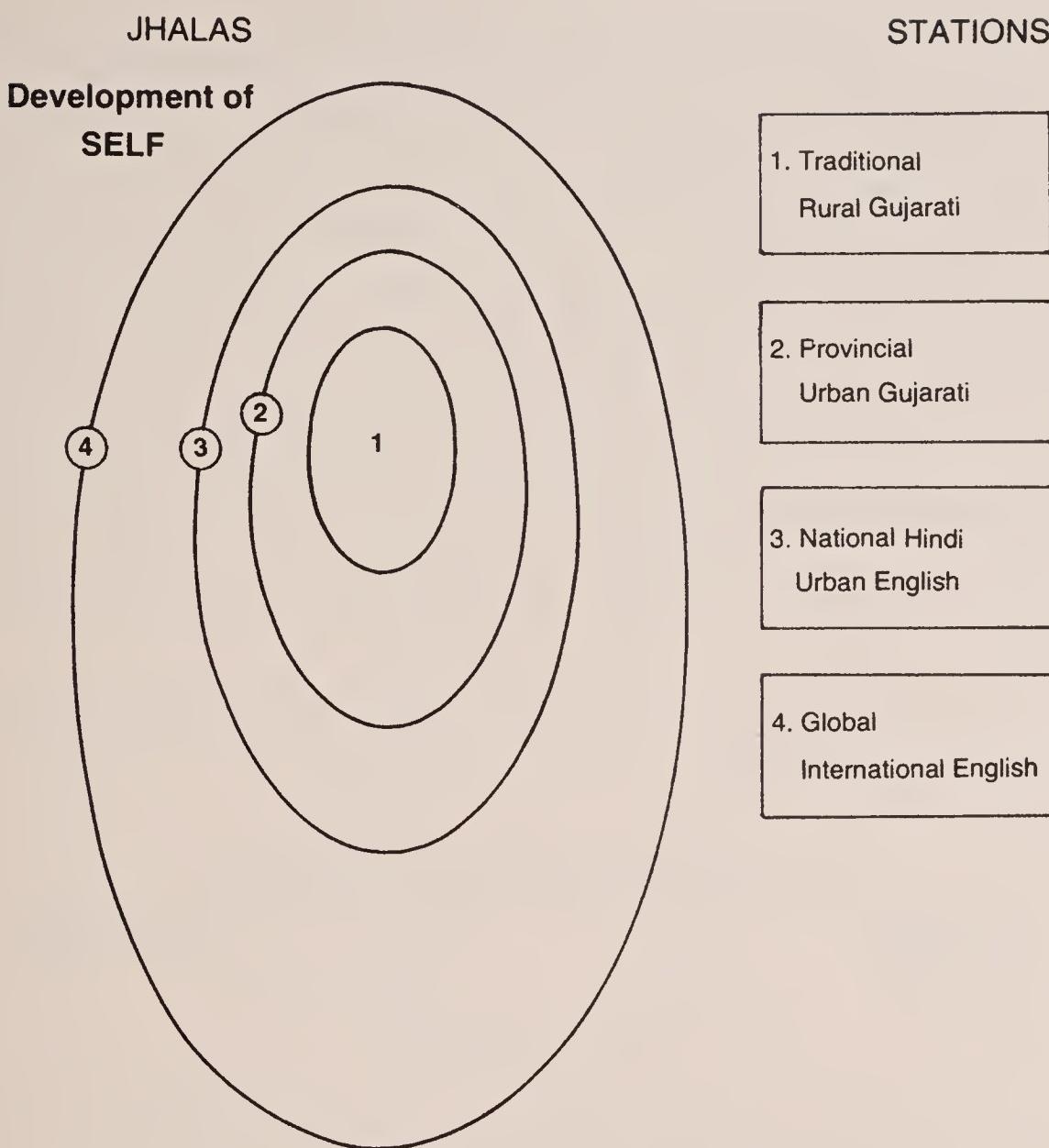
DIAGRAM A

If we assume that the *self* only exists because of the existence of the *other*, and if the *self* is a constantly changing state, then the *self's* recognition of the *other* is also in constant change. The *other* is something the *self* is not, it confronts the *self* and thereby creates a dialogue. In our experience as filmmakers the *other* has two components. As shown in diagram B, the *other* is divided in two—the *inside* and the *outside*. The *self* as representative of the *outside* is the *other* to the *inside* and vice versa. The audience and those filmed are both the *other* to the filmic *self*, but at different times. During the filming process the *other*·is the subject filmed. When shown to the sponsoring audience, the film which was the *other* in the field, is now part of the fil-

mic *self*. To the audience the film and the filmmaker are closely linked. The filmmaker, who was the *outsider* to those filmed is transferred to the position of the *insider* before the audience. For there to be a dialogue at all between the *self* and the *other*, it is vital for the clear recognition of the *self* and the *other*, by both sides. This recognition of the distinctiveness leads to what might be termed 'the achieved working proximity'. This proximity is arrived at by the adjustment between the *self's desired distance* with the *other* and the *permitted distance* the *other* grants the *self* in the field encounter. Gadamer's comment on 'historical distance', and Ricouer's on 'distanciation' expand on this theme.

The quality and type of the *otherness* confronted is continually negotiable.

SELF AND THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OTHER

INSIDE

OUTSIDE

Family

Partner

Aquaintance

SELF

National Audience

Fellow Ethnic

International Audience

| 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
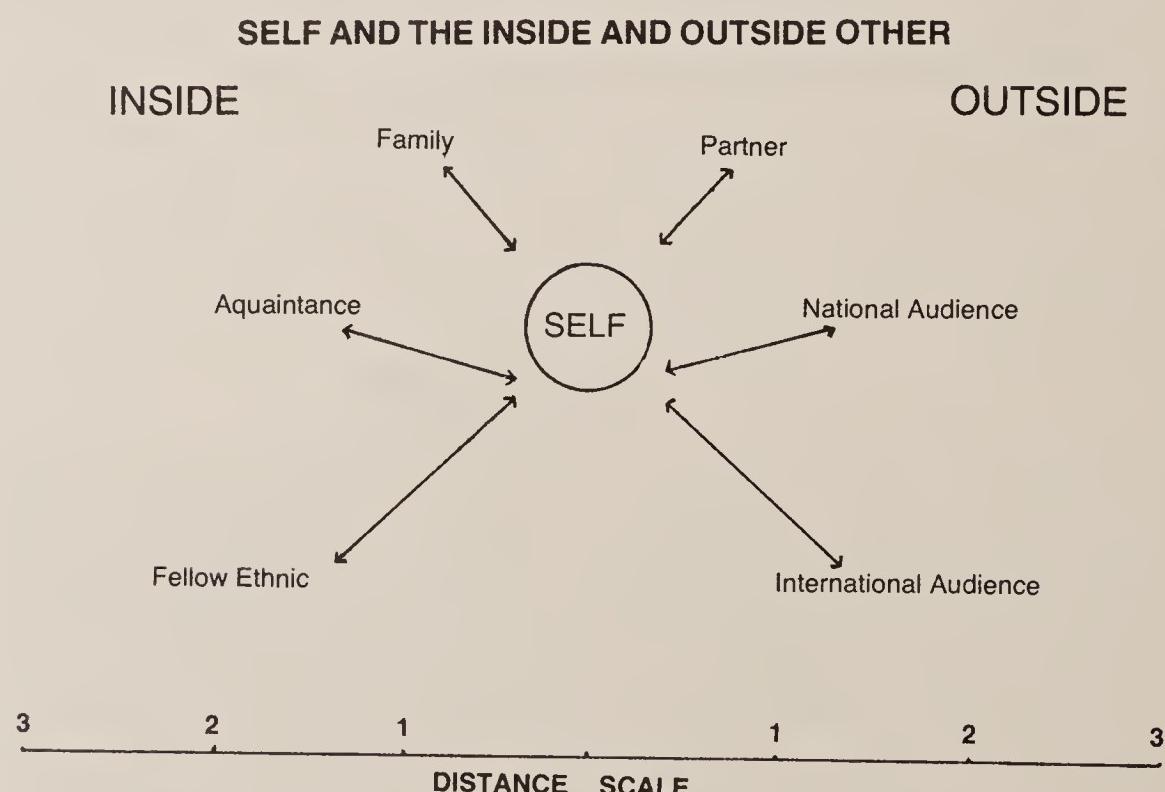
DISTANCE   SCALE

DIAGRAM B

On the linear scale from one to six (diagram C), each state is progressively more distancing and differentiates one type of *other* from the next. The quality of the *other* faced in the encounter between one's mother, one's coun-

tryman or an unknown foreigner, is quite different. Though the Gujarati terms are not linguistically perfectly isomorphic with the English terms, they do approximate in the overall comparison and are presented as such. From the certainty of *mine*, at position 1 to the doubt of *whose* at position 6, all the stages of *otherness* are included. The various positions of ethnographic film schools, observational,

Desired Distances of the SELF

1. Mine/Maru
2. Ours/Amaru
3. All of ours/Amara Saunu

4. Yours/Tamaru
5. Theirs/Temnu
6. Whose?/Kenu?
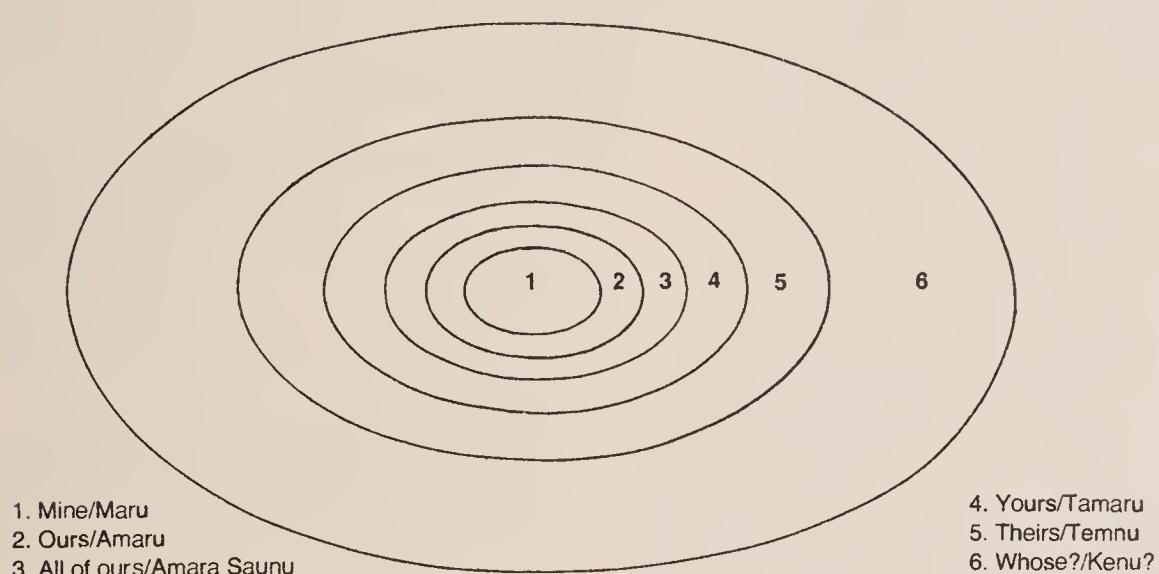
DIAGRAM C

impressionistic, participatory, biographic and informational, recognize a particular *other* from the six types, and it is this *other* that the approach addresses. The observational stance in the pursuit of a scientific recording of a

PERMITTED AND DESIRED DISTANCE

Permitted dist. by number of activities given access to: Private/Public scale

Desired dist. by category of proximity sought by investigator:
1. Mine/Maru
2. Ours/Amaru
3. All of ours/Amara Saunu
4. Yours/Tamaru
5. Theirs/Tamaru
6. Whose?/Kenu?
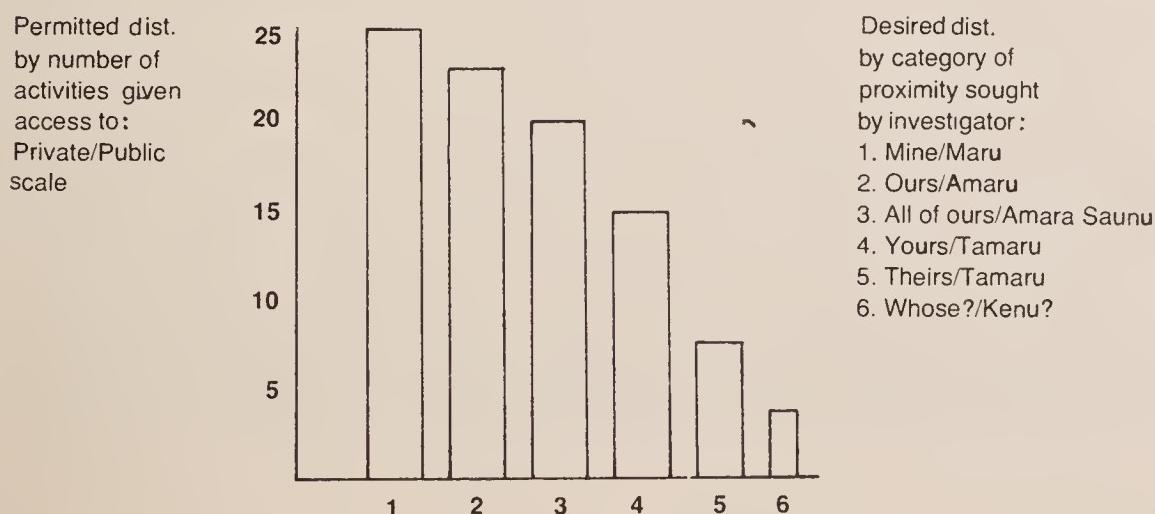
DIAGRAM D

particular dance style necessarily maintains a distance from the subject filmed (R. Sandall; E.R. Sorenson & A. Jablonko, 1975, p. 125-132; p. 151-167). A closer, more familiar proximity is desired by the biographical or participatory filmmaker in his objective of recording, as might be desired in his filming of family conversations. The selection of desired distance is dictated by the objective of the filmmaker. It should be noted that the selected *other* does not dismiss the remaining *others* from the project, or even that they are unused, it only means that their status is subordinate to the *other* selected.

This *desired distance* sought by the filmmaker is conditioned and altered in the field by the *permitted distance* granted by the *other*. The multiple factors of politics, duration of stay, status, perceived attitude of the filmmaker, his collaborators, are all components to his identity.

His access to the society, which is observable through the activities he participates in, can be determined on the 'private-to-public' scale by the *permitted distance* the filmmaker has. Both *desired distance* and *permitted distance*, that together constitute the actual working proximity, are interactions between the *outsider* and the *insider's* response to the *outsider*. Their interaction as a whole is embedded in the larger regulatory rules of the society concerned. This can be termed the *emic distance*. *Emic distance*, for example, may regulate that a man cannot look on the birth of a child. Under such circumstances no facility of language or years of stay will gain a man an access to such an event.

However, in another instance, emic values will not permit a son to examine his own mother but an outside male doctor may very well be permitted. The position of outsider-women is in some societies quite advantageous with regard to access. They, in such instances, may have opportunities to experience both worlds—privilege into the women's realm and are also allowed to converse with men by the accepted rules of emic distance (J. Guyer, personal communication, 1985).

A Shompen woman carrying a baby on her back.

Above: An Abor dance.
Left: An Andamanese couple.
Opposite above: A Riang girl carding cotton.
Below: Nicobarese returning from the forest.
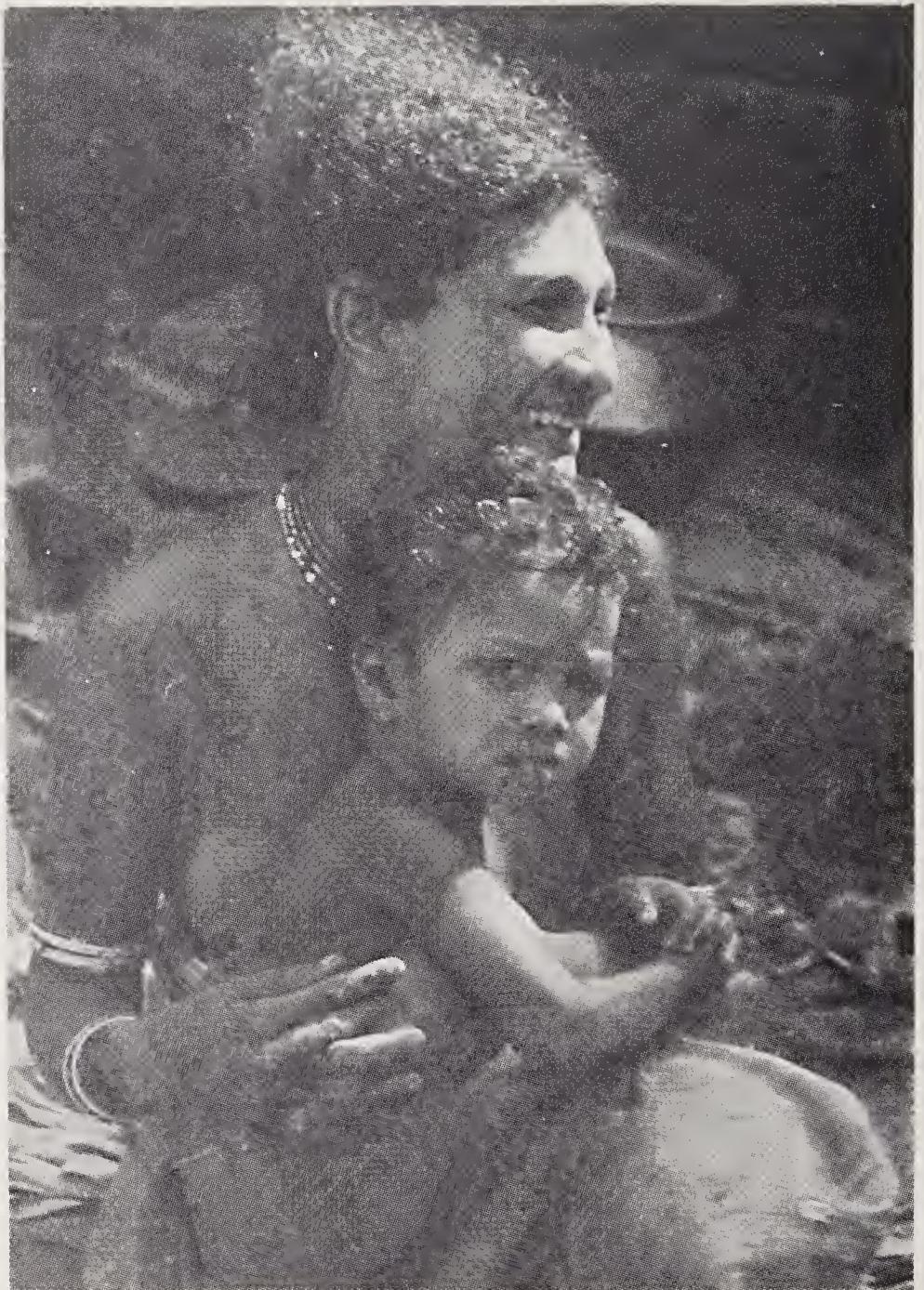
A Cholanaikan mother with child.

Pounding grain.

An Asur extracting iron from ore by an indigenous process in Chota Nagpur.

Children of Lahaul threshing corn.

A young Maria mother.

A Toda beauty standing at the entrance of her dwelling.

The Onge in a canoe race.

A typical Birhor house.

Mullukurumba fishing with baskets.

What must be kept in mind is that these indigenous rules for access are tempered in every individual case by the sanctions of *desired* and *permitted distances*. On the emic stage, emic distances suggest boundaries, while desired and permitted distances combine to demonstrate relationships in the actual working proximity. Such interaction is best illustrated by diagram E. Using the grammar of spoken language, the position of the *self* is a sliding-scale opposite those of *ap-tame-tun* (thou-you-you[inferior]) *ap* is the expression *thou* and connotes an asymmetrical relationship, in which the *other* is superior to the *self*, i.e. an ethnographic filmmaker filming the Pope and Papacy or the Dalai Lama and his Court in Tibet, is potentially in the position of the subordinate. *Tame or you* states the idea of equal status between the *self* and the *other*, while *tun* or *you-inferior* is the relationship between the superior *self* and the inferior *other*. There is much individual variation in

SLIDING SCALE

10

The 3 statuses of the OTHER
STATIONS

Ap/Thou   Higher

5 SELF

Tame/You   Equal

Tun/You: Inferior   Lower

1
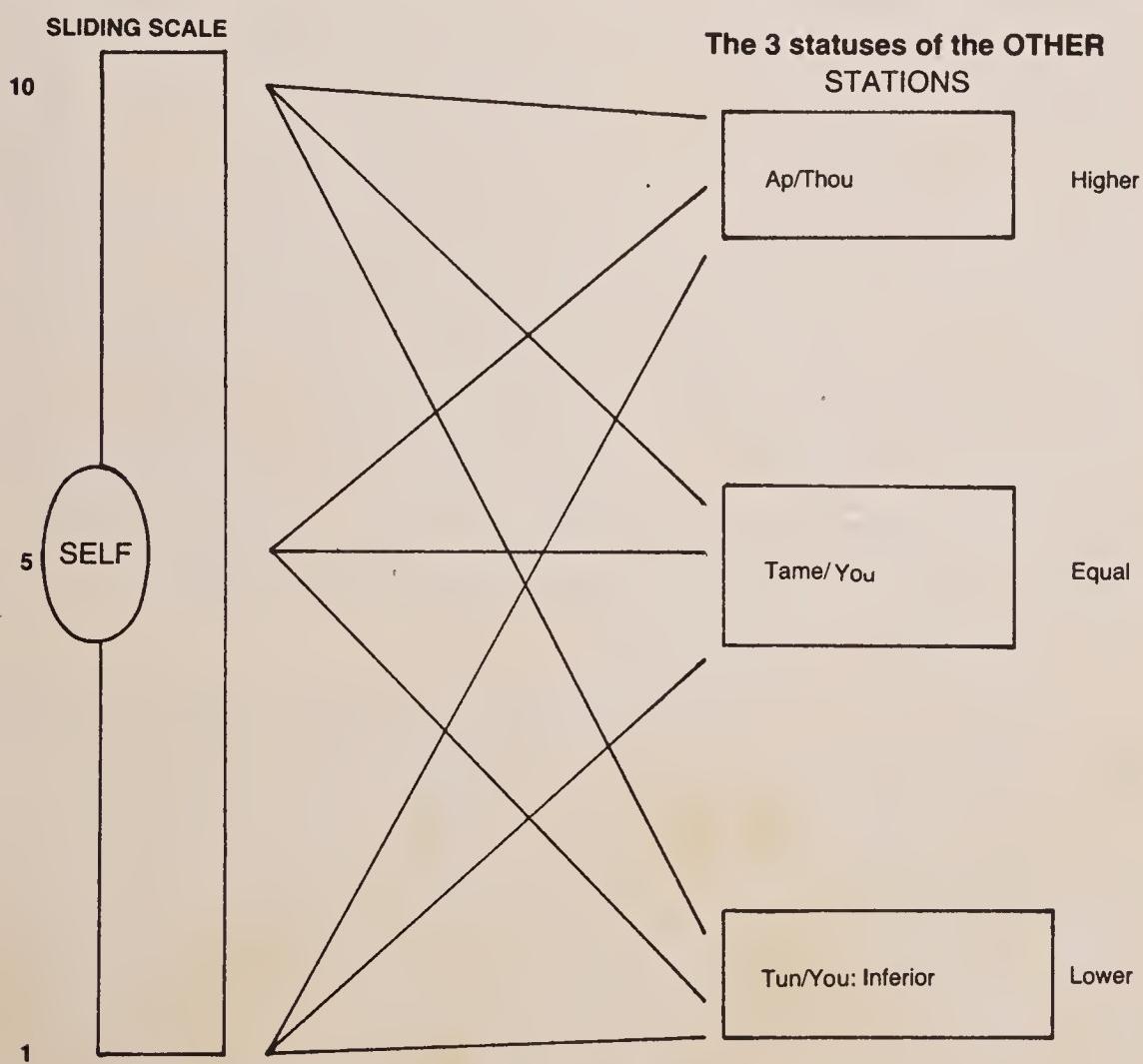
DIAGRAM E

any real encounter and the dynamics of the situation is in the changing relationships and in changes in attitude between the *other* and the *self*. Jean Rouch's recognition of the type of the *other*, as well as his relationship with the *other* could have changed over the years he has filmed in the same region in west Africa. It is also possible to surmise, that the Kung Bushman's attitude towards John Marshall has changed during the thirty years they have been in contact. The quality of the relationship could predict the film encounter. The reality of a point of view, is always the product of a negotiated relationship established by the actual contact between the *self* and the *other*.

In an earlier paper (J & R. Jhala, p. 26–36, 1985) we discussed the philosophy, aim, and consequences of the ethnographic film. It was noted that there is an ethnic perception towards the medium and the filmmaking process that is unrecognized by the discipline of visual anthropology. This appraisal served as a background, in front of which we have tried to assess the relationship obtaining between the filmed (*other*) and the filmmakers (*self*). This theoretical thesis will need to be illustrated by ethnographic example of the filmmaking experience. By comparing three separate filmmaking projects undertaken at different times with different ethnic groups, and showing the conditions and nuances structuring each relationship, it should be possible to make clear our abstract ideas about the individuality and complexity of each ethnographic film encounter. The film projects spanned the years from 1976 to 1983.

Some of the questions such an enquiry must address are: What was the power relationship between the filmmakers and those filmed? What was the nature of the social interaction between them? What was the objective of the filmmaking project? By whose invitation and instruction was the film team empowered to penetrate an ethnic enclave? Finally, of what kind of verbal language fluency did the filmmakers share with their subjects?

CASE STUDIES

The *Wangchu (Forgotten Headhunters)*, the *Bharvad* (*Bharvad Predicament*), and the *Rajput (A Zenana)*, are three film projects that shall be analyzed.

I

Forgotten Headhunters

As the *Wangchus* live in Arunachal Pradesh, on the India/Burma border, a militarily sensitive area, normal access to this region is barred to ordinary Indian citizens who are not natives of the province. Consequently, permission is needed to be obtained from the Central Government at New Delhi. The Central Government subsequently informed the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh, which in turn alerted the District Commissioner, about the arrival of the film team. This access privilege into a politically sensitive area required that the filmic objective be understood by all levels of the administrative apparatus. Any perceived deviation from the submitted script would constitute a subversive act and meant immediate expulsion from the State.

The recognized official objective of the filming, was 'salvage' visual anthropology. The recording of public rituals, songs, dances and the processes of material life i.e. arrow making and rice planting, were given government approval. The film team was housed in a government guest bungalow in the Tirap district capital, Khonsa. A jeep accompanied by an official guide was deputized by the District Commissioner to serve as interpreter to the team. Movements from the district town to various villages were co-ordinated by the guide. He also negotiated the living arrangements in the villages. The guide was both a remover of obstacles for the team and a watch-dog over team activites for the government.

Ethnically, the film team were Indo-Caucasian while

the *Wangchus* are Tibeto/Burman peoples. The team spoke no Wangchu. Although the film team spent a longer time in the state the total length of stay could not have exceeded thirty days in the *Wangchu* village of Pongchou where the filming took place. As a consequence of this difference in cultural background and the filmmaking modus operandi, the inhabitants of Pongchou saw the film crew as extensions of the powerful governmental apparatus. They ascribed an elevated officer status to the film personnel that had actually no real executive authority. The *Wangchus* angled their day to day relations on an oblique path of minimal involvement and no confrontation. They were always friendly but never inviting, correct but not forthcoming. Through the skillful deployment of the interpreter, a blind was erected towards certain activities; e.g. visiting the poppy gardens.

The infrequent conversational exchanges that took place, were between the leaders of the village and the team. The sick leprous Chief (in his youth a much feared warrior and headhunter) and some of the youth leaders of the village were the only persons who engaged in a stylized dialogue through the interpreter. What appeared to be expressed was what they wished to broadcast, knowledge we might be persuaded to convey to the bosses i.e. the government, they presumed we worked for (*ibid* p. 28–29).

In such circumstances, the film team made the only kind of film it could. *Forgotten Headhunters* is about the harvest festival and the headhunter's dance. The recording of public functions, the kind of events all communities possess and that are precisely constituted for sharing in public with the whole community and with outsiders, was what was most convenient to film. There was no attempt at dialogue, no attempt at providing those filmed a voice, no sense of participation in an ethnic event, even though the filmed occasion was a celebration of *Wangchu* custom and ritual. The asymmetrical power relationship, with which the film team was burdened by virtue of govern-

ment involvement, could not be displaced given the few weeks of residence in the community. A distance was maintained whereby no meaningful interaction could take place. No singular event occurred, necessitating unconventional behavior that may have drawn the two parties together, as experienced by Geertz and others (C. Geertz 1973. p. 412-453). Neither party was dependent on the other, both were puppets of governmental design put in forced proximity. The *Wangchu* pursued a demeanor of necessary diplomacy, while the filmmakers used the opportunity of being present to pry, record, scavenge and salvage whatever was offered or occurred.

The *self* and the *other* were there face to face, but by the dynamic of 'emic distance' and 'desired distance' rules, were in a low level communication with each other (Diagram D). On the hierarchical scale of *ap/tame/tun* (Diagram E), the filmmakers were held in an *ap/tun* relationship. This position of rigid dominance prevented any real growth of familiarity between the *self* and the *other*. Whatever humanity this film emanates is accidental, innate and unavoidable, granted unconsciously by two minimally interacting parties. It occurs in the music and dance sequences when the level of participation by the Wangchu is so great, and the emotion so intense that the alien filmmakers are conceptually ejected.

II

Bharvad Predicament

Very different conditions were operating in the encounter between the filmmakers and the pastoralist *Bharvad* of Jesada village in Gujarat, western India. Jesada is forty miles from the core filmmakers home. The *Bharvads* and the filmmakers shared a common language (Jhalavari, a dialect of Gujarati). The Bharvadi families selected for portrayal were related to each other and were well known

to the filmmakers. This relationship existed at least ten years prior to the first filmmaking experience. Thereafter, the period of filmmaking was of intermittent intensity and spanned five years—1979 to 1983. Though the focus of the filmmaking was on the subject of pastoralism, the film team's access and interaction was not restricted to just the *Bharvad* pastoralists. All castes of the multi-caste village of about 2000 people, had had some interaction with the filmmakers. In addition to those in Jesada, the filmmakers filmed and consulted with individuals of other castes of neighbouring villages. They spoke with the spiritual leaders, genealogists and shamans of the *Bharvad*, who in many cases lived at distances of over a hundred miles or more from Jesada. The characteristics of pastoralism demonstrated by the movement of cattle over wide territories and the potential threat of damage to farm crops, also put the filmmakers in touch with the district administrative authorities, and their regulatory arms— the law courts and the police.

During this period, the filmmakers were participants in other villages and in regional activities that had no connection with the film project. In one instance they were instrumental advocates in procuring drought-relief-fodder for the cattle, in another they drove a farmer's son to a district hospital for treatment from snake bite. They participated in the festivals of the numerous castes in surrounding villages, especially in the all night sessions of devotional singing. In summary, the filmmakers were well known in the community, their film objective was known, their position in regard to the village was not ambiguous. Their involvement in Jesada was known to communities outside who had influential ties with the village. In comparison with the Wangchu film project, the social base for the Bharvad project was wide in geographical scale and deep in time dimension. The filmmakers were not viewed as belonging to the government hierarchy nor were they transient. They shared a common history and had a cul-

tural empathy with those in the area.

This kind of understanding and involvement in the affairs of the *other*, empowered the filmmakers to address issues very different from those in the Wangchu situation. This greater access also brought a completely different set of constraints on the team. We need to clarify what the advantages and disadvantages this situation presented, especially as there was a direct dialogue between those filmed and the filmmakers, and with it came expectations of attitudes and behaviour each expected of the other.

Privileged access made it possible to shift the emphasis of investigation from observational recording, in which individuals and groups are seen acting in and on the material world, to a position of being participant in the social dynamics of the situation. In such a situation it becomes possible to be chronicler, confidant and advisor to the filmed *other*. Ideas, aspirations and fears become the central focus, and the visible world of action is used to substantiate the drama of invisible forces. Actions in themselves become of relatively little importance and those depicting 'process' activities are subordinated to a position of ornament and background. Pottery making or the milking of cows perform adjectival functions with regard to an understanding of the individual's personality.

As a consequence of the emphasis on psychological states, ethnographic films encounter and nurture the portrayal of personality. People assert their individuality and the illustration of this projection on film demonstrates two images; firstly, the person as an unique individual and secondly, as an icon representative of the group. In the Bharvad case the dominant personalities are two senior men, householders and cattleowners, Maya and Mera. The sons of brothers, they ply independent life strategies that criss-cross in interdependence at certain periods. Maya's ambit is the village of Jesada, while Mera's encompasses Maya's in that he maintains links with the closest large town. It is from what they say and do, that

we conjure up a picture of Bharvad personality and life.

The Bharvad notion of *self* is inseparably tied to the open scrublands on which their cattle graze, as well as with the special relationship that exists between the Bharvad and his cattle. According to Mera Bharvad, "a Bharvad is not a Bharvad unless he can call his bull from a herd of a thousand like a mother can summon her daughter from a group of schoolchildren", further, "one may meet the Bharvad *man* (jann) in the town or on a bus, the Bharvad *person* (*gnatilo*) in his village home, but the true Bharvad *self* (*jiv*) can only be met on the grasslands". The knowledge of Bharvadi attitude and personality makes it essential for the filmmakers to be sensitive to Bharvad values and desires and propels them to seek environments favourable in which to engage in Bharvad dialogue.

Further, in the Bharvad instance, it is not sufficient for the filmmakers to gain familiarity with the people only. It is equally important to build a rapport with Bharvad animals. In practical terms, this means wearing clothes similar to those worn by the Bharvad so as not to alarm the cattle. Knowledge of cattle-calls with which to communicate with the cattle must be acquired. Recognition of the herd's leaders or lead cows and patterns of animal behavior at watering places and at milking times is required. This understanding attitude towards the cattle makes the filmmaker less threatening to the animals and as a consequence helps to foster a closer bond with the Bharvad. The cow is God and child to the Bharvad, and therefore the recording of Bharvad interaction between people alone would reveal only a partial image of the Bharvad *self*. For a fuller understanding of this *self* it is imperative that the filmmakers record Bharvad interaction with their cattle.

The trajectory made by the emphasis of recognizing and representing the *other's* voice, as understood by the appreciation of emic values, allows the filmmaker to sketch an icon of 'the Bharvad personality'. The collective rep-

resentation of the ideas of the personalities become issues of common concern for the community. As film is perhaps the most efficient tool with which to record the immediate moment in all its audio/visual richness and complexity, the filmmaker is often driven towards topics that are of debate in the ethnic community. To the traditionally recognized tasks of recording material culture and personality portrayal, can be added the exploration of emic issues as objectives of ethnographic filmmaking. In this case, the principal personalities, Mera and Maya, steer the focus of the film investigation to the most relevant issue that had seized the entire multi-caste community at that time. The debate centered around the issue of grazing rights, access to, and trespass of cattle through fallow farm lands. This conflict between farmers and cattle-herders became the pivot of the film.

Unlike the filming of physical violence (such as rioting etc), the filming of conflict resolution over a protracted period of time is difficult to record. In many situations it is not something a community wishes to share with outsiders. In addition, often the negotiation of conflict resolution is not visually dramatic but instead is, overwhelmingly verbal.

Given this potential situation the difficulty is even more compounded when the filmmakers are involved in a multi-caste village that has split into factional groups. The 'actual working proximity' achieved by the filmmakers was conditioned by the sanctions of 'permitted' and 'desired distances' which rested on a high degree of mutual regard between the village and the filmmakers. The neutrality of the filmmakers as well as their role as mediators between the contending factions was believed in by both sides, and that confidence in the filmmakers enabled this kind of filmmaking effort to continue.

The confirmation of a neutral and concerned status by the community on the filmmakers requires them to maintain a high level of political awareness at all times. The

project and objective of the moment must not be allowed to upset the privileged neutrality achieved. When the ethnographic filmmakers belong to the area, this awareness can come quite naturally. The personal aspirations and long term goals of continuing work in the region acts against the adoption of too partisan a position. The network of social relations the filmmakers are a part of, also imposes a mode of conduct that must express responsibility and reciprocity towards the persons addressed. These constraints do not weigh too heavily on foreign filmmakers who are sojourners, and for whom the pressures of community politics are of tactical concern only during the short period of filmmaking. For them there is seldom opportunity or necessity to return to the region. Sometimes this enables the outsider to record events that the insider could not attempt, as his balanced neutrality is a shifting thing and needs constant care, because different sections of the community are at all times evaluating the attitude and the position taken by the filmmakers on the local ongoing issues.

The Wangchus and the Bharvad are two examples of interaction between the filmmakers and those filmed. We have explored the different levels of entry into a community and the kind of film-enquiry that is possible when one is ethnically different, when one cannot speak the language and finally, when one is a sojourner for a short period.

Our third example of the relationship between the *self* and the *other* shifts yet to another level of complexity. It attempts to depict *a zenana*.

III

A Zenana

Our examination is broken into three parts: (a) Interaction prior to filming, (b) filming on location and (c) post

production and completion period. The first part discusses the negotiation process that took place at various levels and with different parties. The second details the encounters with those filmed and the third addresses the issues of editing, portrayal, western/national audience expectations, and finally the reactions and criticisms of the film by the persons filmed.

The film is particularly chosen for discussion because of its relevance to the investigation of the *self* and the *other*. The complexities of confronting the role of the *self* and the *other* to the degree experienced in this particular film project, was quite unlike any before. Being about the women in our paternal family, this film therefore is somewhat different from most traditional ethnographic films, where the filmmaking team is seldom a member of the community being filmed. A fundamental difference from most other ethnographic films was that the filmmaking objective was not the cause of the relationship. It did not bring the filmmaker and the filmed together. In fact, the reverse was true. The prior relationship between the filmmaker and the filmed was responsible for the germination of the idea for such a film. It was a product of the relationship. A relationship in which the filmic enterprise was but one brief episode. This is not to suggest that the film had no impact or relevance but rather that the impact did not in any fundamental way alter the long term bond between the indigenous filmmakers and the individuals portrayed in the film.

The film *A Zenana* was funded by the University of Sydney and was made by us, in collaboration with an Australian ethnographic filmmaker, Roger Sandall. It had three objectives: firstly, it attempted to fulfil the traditional ethnographic film requirement of providing information about a little known institution, the 'zenana'. In this film the zenana was the womens' area of residence in the house of a Hindu *Rajput* family. How life was and is for women in such a family, was one criterion for filming. The second

objective, was the need felt by us, the son and daughter-in-law, to record not so much what certain people did, for we were quite familiar with the duties and activities of most individuals, but what they thought and felt. This seemed more satisfying for us and those being filmed. The third reason was to record details of activities, the etiquette and norm, as well as the feel of the environment—stone lattice walls, the dancing in the courtyard, the wild pigeons and parrots, the heat and the rhythm that was the way of life we knew in the zenana. There was considerable debate between us (the *self*) and the family (the *other*) about the merits of such a film and whether it should be allowed to be made at all. After all, the zenana was the most private part of the family and historically had always been closed to the outside. The main reason that permission was granted, was because it was hoped that such a film could serve as a valuable record of family traditions, and specially as many of the family members had moved away to metropolitan areas. It is unlikely that permission would have been given to an outsider. Here is our first interaction between the self and the inside—*other*.

Even though two Indian filmmakers (the *self*), were making a film about their family (the *self*), the Government of India (*other*), decided as the third filmmaker was an Australian that the film project was a foreign collaboration. Not only did Roger Sandall need permission from the Government of India but we, ourselves, had to obtain clearance to make a film about ourselves. The granted permission had many appended restrictions about what could or couldn't be portrayed. Here is an example of another kind of interaction between the *self* and the *other* in which the other imposes constraints on the final product. As our filmmaking objectives included future work in India, these directives by government were not taken lightly by either the indigenous or foreign filmmaker.

Unlike the interactions of the open Yanamamo encampment or amongst the cattle corrals of *Lorang's Way*

the filmmakers could not occupy at all times a particular environmental niche from which to observe and select what to film. For western sensibilities it was more like filming in a nunnery and the Vatican. Everything was formal and controlled from the inside. Life conditioned by social hierarchy and restrained by the stratification of persons of different rank and caste, made life in the zenana formal and the pace of life measured. This was successfully portrayed. The informality, individuality and laughter, which is also part of the zenana experience is shown in the personal encounter revealed in the conversations.

The film relies predominantly on conversations, to convey information, sentiment and the social organization of the zenana. All the conversational scenes were shot by the son and insider, except for a brief one in which Roger shows the spatial relationship between the mother, daughter-in-law and the son. In almost all instances the location for the conversations were chosen by those filmed and interestingly enough, corresponded to the spot they had made private and exclusive by their usage over a long period of time. Kesar Bai, the senior maid, for instance, used the afternoon lull in which she normally peels vegetables, to speak to us, and chose the exact place that had become her private place over a period of forty years. In this case all of us sat on the ground, the camera on a little high hat, a little below eye level looking up. The interviewer is also the cameraman and for most of the conversation does not put his eye to the camera, except at lulls between questions when the frame is changed. Roger, recording sound, is in the next room. His physical presence has little impact on the interaction. This is an interaction in which the two *others* (inside and outside) are separated by the *self*.

The interview with Alarakhi Bai and Hemu Bai, the singers, which is perhaps the most animated, was recorded in the courtyard. It is the only conversation in which two persons address the camera together. This was

done because they wanted it so, and also because they have always been seen together in the view of others in the zenana. The alternate answering of questions by the women is directly related to their singing style in which when one singer pauses to catch her breath, the other continues the song. At no time can the song be interrupted and that quality is transferred to the conversation. The *self* and the inside-*other* collaborate by their knowledge of each other to create a unique event.

The conversation with the mother was on a Wednesday afternoon. This is specifically obvious from the colour of the women's sarees as Wednesday is the color for wearing green in the zenana. The composition is the following: The Mother is seated in a customary chair by the window, her daughter-in-law on a lower stool beside her and the cameraman/son sits on the carpet in front of them. The position and place of the three participants conform to everyday practise. Juniors never sit on the level of seniors, the daughter-in-law must sit with her head properly covered with her sari, while the son has a more relaxed role. He can be dressed in informal western clothes or more formal traditional ones. The filming session could have followed a game of cards and ended with the arrival of afternoon tea.

Unlike the total outsider, we could not ask certain questions which might have been permitted to an outside investigator. We could, on the other hand, ask questions which the outsider's lack of information and acceptance would not allow. This access, makes for a qualitative change in the mode and content of conversational enquiry in an ethnographic film. It raises many problems because the answers that are meaningful for the insider may be irrelevant for the outsider—audience. Details, and points of etiquette and personal histories that are valued by the insiders could be meaningless to the outsider. General information about the zenana relevant for the west seems matter of fact, indeed superficial for the knowing insiders.

This becomes a real problem when the film team is comprised of *insider-outsider* combination and a tug-of-war is joined by the need to satisfy 'emic' and 'etic' requirements of the film dialogue to the satisfaction of both parties.

As alluded to, no conversations were happenstance. The camera almost never records the conversational interaction between people. The dialogue is always between the person filmed and the camera. Conversation is initiated by the cameraperson but is controlled by the speakers in their selection of locale and the type of response granted. Whether the questions were dismissed outright or received elaborate answers, depended largely on their sense of propriety to the respondent. The conversational encounters were platforms manifesting asymmetrical relationships, of social hierarchy and emotional proximity. This was made apparent on the editing table. We found in watching the footage that camera distance and framing was dictated by the relationship between the camera interviewer and those interviewed.

For instance Kesar Bai, the senior maid, was the maid of the cameraman's grandmother and therefore a person demanding greater formal respect than Kamu Bai who was his children's maid, and who had in fact looked after him as a boy. The camera is more physically distant from Kesar Bai, the questions asked of her were also more restrained, as were her answers. Kamu Bai, on the other hand was fully conscious that the cameraman was somebody she had fed and admonished not so many years ago, and in this 'private conversation' she could express herself freely because of that prior relationship. This does not of course mean that she did not recognize the factual adult son's status, and the hierarchically superior position of the cameraman. Kamu Bai used the exceptional situation of the filming event, as a time window to travel to a period of greater personal intimacy she had shared with the cameraman. This enabled her to speak and reveal elements of her character which normally would have re-

mained hidden in the daily encounter.

When the film was seen in the zenana, this seemingly inappropriate conduct was much debated. Kamu Bai defended her action, by claiming a personal right (*haq*) earned by her affection (*lad*) for the cameraman, gained by the close intimacy of past years that permits in certain situations the transgression from her hierarchically inferior position as maid.

Unlike the maids and the singers, in which situation the cameraman is socially superior, the roles are reversed during the conversations with the mother. He is inferior by social rank, subordinate by virtue of being the son, subordinate also as he is in the female realm and by the particular fact that he comes to this interaction in his role of the filmmaker. This formidable asymmetry, which would perhaps predict a formal and distant interaction is altered by the emotional proximity that is part of the mother and son relationship. The camera is most intimate in this exchange.

This realization, as stated earlier of camera intimacy and distance only came when viewed on the editing table much later. The value of film conversations, as an ingredient of ethnographic film, depends on the quality of the exchange which in turn depends greatly on the relationship of the participants. A satisfactory relationship could be made possible by the sharing of language between interviewer and the interviewed, by the shared perception of mutual respect and understanding. For both factors to exist it may be necessary for the outsider to spend a good deal of time with the people he or she is portraying.

By concentrating on the conversation of individuals, who as functionaries constitute a living cultural organism, rather than on their activities, we might have endowed them with a recognition and a power. By speaking and being heard, Kamu Bai and Kesar Bai share a humanity with the western national viewer in whose projection they are recognized as forces influencing and structuring their

individual lives as well as of those around them. The recording mechanism and the filmmakers take a backseat in what might be termed a conversation between two different cultures. It would be naive to assume that we, the filmmakers, give up all control. However, what is significant is that the persons depicted speak out from the celluloid window. Whether it is Nai, the Balinese healer, Lorang or Kamu Bai, the message in the spoken phrase is substantially theirs.

We have elsewhere addressed the issues of representation of non western/non dominant cultures as well as the necessity of knowing the local language for the filmmaker aspiring to present the emic forces and opinions of a community. (J. and R. Jhala: 1985). At another time we hope to extend our inquiry to include other aspects of the *self* and *other* dialogue. The question of the plurality of the inner voices of the self, the Hindu notion of the compartmental personality and the ordering of space, the multiplicity of language types that are manifest in a dialogue are some ideas that could bear scrutiny. In these pages we attempted to draw out the variety and complexity of the relationships that obtain, revolve and evolve in the encounter between the *other* and the *self*.

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Susanta K. Chattopadhyay

My Experiences as a Cameraman in the Anthropological Survey

In 1953, after seven eventful years in the feature film industry I joined the Anthropological Survey as a cameraman. My duties entailed a lot of touring all over India to make documentary films of the various tribal communities. I was expected to film those unique cultural aspects which are relevant to social anthropology. Documenting tribal life excludes all artificial paraphernalia of a film-studio such as artificial lighting, a prepared script in arranged scenarios, being enacted by participating film stars in tune with the director's direction. There are no pre-arranged scenes either. My subjects were the simple unsophisticated folk living in high altitude villages surrounded by snow-covered mountains, in islands, in caves or in dense jungles.

To start with, I was given only a 16mm movie camera and I had to work with whatever I was given. At that time, it was not for me to choose; for instance, I was given a 16mm Kodachrome (ASAIO) film while I wanted to expose negative film. I was given to understand that the Survey had no intention of producing commercial films. Its aim was to document tribal life, and to record their daily activities according to their tribal customs. In compliance with the orders of the higher authorities all the films produced upto 1960 were exposed in 16 frames per second.

Rare Documentation

In 1955, I went to the Little Andaman Islands and stayed there with the Onge tribe for nearly three and a half months and produced a documentary film. In my opinion, the Onge film was the best and rarest documentation I produced during the period of my service. Unfortunately I had to expose the Onge film also in 16 frames per second in order to economize the footage, but the authorities did not think about the future. At present, that type of documentation of the Onge tribe cannot be produced because that environment which I recorded 32 years earlier is completely lost. At the beginning of this year I received an offer from Doordarshan to produce a documentary film on the life of the Padam Adi of Arunachal Pradesh. I went back to shoot the film in March '87 to the same village which I had visited in '54. I noticed a number of changes had taken place in the social and cultural life. The film I produced in 1954 at Ayeng village in Arunachal Pradesh, cannot be compared with the film produced at Ayeng village in 1987.

The most difficult problem with the films exposed in 16 FPS is with the projection. The film exposed in 16 FPS and projected in 24 FPS will raise the speed of the visual and the transformation is ridiculous. A 16 FPS projector is rarely available now. In view of this, I submitted a proposal in the early seventies for stretching the 16 FPS films to 24 FPS, which could be done in India. But that was turned down by the authorities.

All the documentaries produced by the Survey during my time were without sound. In my opinion a film without sound is an incomplete production. Sound plays a vital role in the film. In the sixties, however, I was given a tape-recorder so that I could go to the tribal areas and record, besides environmental sounds, their tribal songs, instrumental music, etc. in the hope that, in the future, I might get a chance to administer sound on my films. But unfor-

tunately, I did not get that opportunity.

I always exposed the films in natural light. But sometimes, I badly missed the advantage of using a battery operated Sungun to shoot at night and inside the tribal huts, as this was not made available to me. I always filmed my subjects as they were engaged in their routine activities in their natural environment. I never influenced them or made them act for my films. I strongly believe that it takes away the effect of spontaneity.

I always prefer the use of a light-weight 16mm movie camera while shooting in tribal areas. The heavy camera with a 400 ft. magazine, heavy stand and battery, takes up too much time to fix before shooting, and by that time, the subject either runs away or the mood is lost.

Taking a movie film requires a team of technicians. But it was not possible for me to organize and take such a team with me. Only twice could I go to the field along with a group of officials from the Survey, and for three field trips, I was allowed to have a junior officer of the Survey accompany me as an assistant. Except on the above-mentioned occasions, I had to produce more than 35 documentary films with just one lowly helper who could only help me by preparing meals and carrying my equipment.

One-man Film Unit

As long as I was in the Survey as a cameraman, I was editing the film, writing the sub-titles and the running commentaries of the films and operating the projector all single handed although doing the editing and the sub-titles and running commentary for every film were certainly not a part of my job; neither was film projection. However, I voluntarily shouldered all these responsibilities. There were no hands in those days to carry a tribal film through its different stages to make it ready for final projection. Repeated requests to the administration were of no avail.

After returning from the Rupkund Expedition, I sent an

elaborately worded appeal to the Director explaining the need for an editing machine, which was finally approved. The Bill & Howell 16mm editing machine for silent films was purchased and with this apparatus professional editing was made possible. This machine is still there in the cinema room of the Survey. When I was attached to the feature film industry during the early part of my career I used to visit the editing room whenever I had a little time and used to assist the film editor there. These three years in the editing studio had already trained me for film editing.

Because my films were silent, I thought it necessary to give them sub-titles. Since the cinematography section was a one man show, there was no one else who could fully explain or give the running commentary during projection, when I was on tour or on leave. In 1960, I prepared subtitles for each and every film documented by me. I got them printed in the office press and after exposing them joined them at the proper place to each of these films, which enhanced their value greatly. There were frequent requests from schools, colleges and other insititutions to screen the films of the Survey. A register, in which the names of such renowned persons as Professors Satyen Bose, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, film director Satyajit Ray, cameraman Subrato Mitra, and Sri Raghubir Singh (photographer) are recorded, may still be found in the Survey office. Anyway my efforts put the films of the Survey on a professional footing.

All Memories are not Pleasant

My first assignment in the Survey was in the Siang Division of NEFA, now East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh, in the year 1954. The Abor, now called Adi, are a mongoloid tribe and are the inhabitants of that area. This first field trip became fixed in my memory because of two gruesome incidents. During our stay there, a local Adi who was engaged as a postal runner, would go to

Pasighat, to collect our mail. After doing so, he would leave Pasighat for our village the next morning. One day, however he left Pasighat in the afternoon and after crossing the Siang river, he was passing through a dense forest towards our camp. The forest was infested with leeches, reptiles and wild elephants. It was very dark and he was walking towards the village all by himself. Suddenly, he noticed that a wild elephant was pursuing him. He always carried a *dao* and a muzzle-loader with him. Apprehending danger he ran for his life and loaded a poisoned arrow in his muzzle-loader. Stopping suddenly he turned back and, in the darkness, locating the vibration of sound he released the poisonous arrow. Fortunately for him, the arrow hit the mark and the elephant, demolishing a number of trees, fell down.

After a few moments, he returned to the spot, where the elephant was struggling in pain. He extracted the arrow which had pierced the centre of the elephant's head and cut out the flesh around it. Carefully, he cut the trunk of the elephant and returned to our camp with the headman of the village at about 3 a.m. The late Dr. B.S. Guha, Founder Director of the Survey, was there and he ordered me to shoot a documentary film immediately, otherwise the dead elephant would be eaten up.

At 5 o' clock in the morning, I rushed there with my movie and still cameras. When I reached there, I saw the jungle had been cleared, some temporary shelters having been raised near the spot where the big animal was being laid. The young men were engaged in peeling the hide of the elephant with the help of axes and daos. It was an ugly sight, enough to jolt anyone's aesthetic sense and the odour that enveloped the atmosphere was nauseating.

After shooting the sequence I walked away and seated myself under a tree, a little apart from the men assembled to partake of their kill. A few minutes later, I saw a youth approach me along with my interpreter. A piece of elephant's meat at the end of a stick was offered to me by

the boy. I tried to convince him by gestures that I did not eat raw meat. The boy ran back without a word to my great relief. But it was shortlived. He came back within minutes, holding the same stick with the meat, only it was singed now. I was going to refuse again, when my interpreter warned me that the Adi men would be greatly annoyed if the offering was refused. So, I had to put a piece of the offering into my mouth however repulsive it was to me.

The second incident took place on the ninth day of our stay at Ayeng village. I used to develop and print the still photographs at night and distribute the prints to the villagers the next day, which pleased them immensely. As usual, after breakfast, I set out with my interpreter and my camera equipment and photo prints in search of subjects. I used to wander about the village throughout the day and shoot the day-to-day activities of the villagers. That particular day, I climbed down the hill and walked some distance towards a valley so that I could take a panoramic view of the Ayeng village. From below the hill, the position of Ayeng village with its *Moshup* (dormitory) appeared like a beautiful painting. I took some still photos and then started shooting with my movie camera. Just then, my interpreter drew my attention to a view at a distance. It was a small procession of some Adi men carrying a load. I hurriedly finished shooting the view of the village and waited for the procession to approach me. As it came near, I noticed that it was a funeral procession. I was somewhat astonished to find that the dead body was neither on a bier, nor on a cot. Two strongly built men were carrying it. One was carrying on his back, the dead man's head and the other was holding the legs. The dead man was being carried in a dangling position. Some belongings of the dead man were placed on his abdomen. It was an extraordinary sight. Without delaying a second I started operating my movie camera. When the procession was just passing by me, I saw through the parallax of the

camera that one of the pall bearers was saying something, excitedly pointing to me. All of a sudden some big stones hit me with immense force on my left temple and leg. There was profuse bleeding due to serious injury and within moments I became unconscious.

Due to this unhappy incident I decided to go back to Calcutta and resign my job. After a week, when I had somewhat recovered, Dr. Guha himself offered to send me back to Calcutta, if I so wished. I requested him to give me some time to decide my future course. On reconsideration, it seemed to me that as I had survived such a severe attack I could not now run away without completing my job. Dr. Guha felt happy and greatly appreciated my decision. Looking back now, I feel that if I had left the Ayeng village after that unpleasant incident and resigned, I would have missed the opportunity to see India in all its diversity of climate, culture, religion and people.

Each ethnic group can be seen to go about its activities in a manner which is unique to that particular tribe only, such as in hunting, fishing, food-gathering, certain elementary types of handicrafts, body decoration, its dress and dances. For instance the Onge of Little Andaman Island hunt only fish and pigs by bow and arrow, whereas the Juang of Keonjhar in Orissa, hunt whatever animal is available without any selection. The Toda of the Nilgiri hills being a vegetarian tribe do not go in either for hunting or fishing. They depend on buffalo milk and milk products for their subsistence. The Asur of Chota Nagpur in Bihar adopt a laborious process to extract iron from iron-ore and by preparing crude instruments from the iron they make their livelihood.

Each Tribe is Distinctive

Each tribe is distinctive in matters of dress and decoration. On the one hand, we see topless Onge beauties moving about in groups with an air of unconcern, while on the other, we come across women in maxi shirts, full-sleeved

blouses and headgear among such tribes as the Gaddi of Himachal Pradesh. In the matter of decoration also, we find some tribes using feathers or horns of animals, and others using necklaces of beads and coins. The Onge tribe paint their dark complexioned naked bodies with red and white ochre mixed with saliva.

While working on the Onge tribe I faced an amusing situation. This tribe uses glass flakes for shaving their heads. They get empty bottles from the sea, thrown away by passing ships. On one of my explorations, I found one Onge woman shaving the head of another woman. It was a rare scene for my film. After filming the sequence and taking some still photographs, I requested both the women, in sign language, to give me a shave too as I badly needed it. The two beauties burst out laughing. I was puzzled as I could not guess the reason for their laughter. Anyway the women finally agreed. Later, I came to know from an old Onge that a married woman shaves the head only of her husband and an unmarried one that of her widower father or unmarried brother. I had very close relations with the Onge who were 129 in number as I had stayed at Little Andaman Island with the Onge for 110 days. I became a close friend, so that they considered me as one of their family. Hence, the Onge beauties did not hesitate at all to oblige me though their tradition forbade it.

In the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu when I was filming a funeral procession of the Toda tribe in the year 1960, I had to face the similar situation that I had faced at Ayeng village in Arunachal Pradesh, during my first tour. The funeral procession was moving along followed by a mobile market. The Toda young men were piloting the buffaloes meant for sacrifice. They believed that the buffalo which provided sustenance to man in this world must follow him to the next to provide him with milk and food. The funeral procession reached the cremation ground covering a distance of about ten kilometres and assembled before the

cremation hut for paying their last homage to the departed soul. Just at that time, one strongly built old Toda struck me on my head with a wooden rod. I was dazed for a few minutes and had to stop shooting. The moment I recovered, I ran to record the proceedings again as they were still going on and these I did not want to miss. I was allowed to go on filming, thanks to the intervention of an educated Toda lady, Miss Devika Piljain, now Mrs. Devika P. Weidemann. It was their strong belief (in the case of both the tribes) that all spirits of living persons attending the funeral procession would get confined inside the camera and soon that would cause their death. A happy contrast to these unpleasant experiences was the one in Car Nicobar Island where the Nicobarese invited me to record a funeral ceremony.

At Tee-top village in Car Nicobar island in 1967, I was alarmed to hear a knock on the door in the middle of the night. I hurriedly got out of bed and lighting the lantern I came out to find two young Nicobarese men. They had come to take me with the camera to their place! I said that it was not possible for me to shoot a film at this time of night but I could see that the young Nicobarese would not leave without me. Reluctantly, I accompanied them hoping that dawn would break soon. After an hour's walk they stopped in front of a Nicobarese hut and I was asked to wait there. In the meantime I saw, to my great relief, the primary school headmaster whom I knew and who could speak English. He explained to me that the mother of these Nicobarese youth had passed away, and that morning, they were making arrangements for her funeral. Hence, the boys brought me there to make a documentary of it. Here indeed was a contrast to the two funeral sequences I had taken in Arunachal Pradesh and Nilgiri Hills where they had attacked me.

A Toda Wedding

One of the more interesting sequences that I took was a

marriage ceremony of a Toda couple. It lasted throughout the day. As the sun had set, it was hardly possible for me to shoot the rituals that would be performed by the bride. In the Toda community, the marriage ceremony is known as the 'Bow and Arrow' ceremony. This is performed only when the bride has conceived. The bride would herself make blisters on both her hands and the number of blisters would show the number of months of her pregnancy. After lighting a lamp she put a wick on the fire and applied the smouldering wick to her left hand. In this way four blisters were formed. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough light for photography. However, I managed to create my own flash lights with lighted newspapers. In that lumination, I exposed my film and was happy that I did not have to miss the sequence.

The Onge have a unique style of fishing in the sea with the bow and arrow. They always aim at the fish in the rolling water and then shoot the arrow. They never take more than one arrow. The moment the arrow is released the Onge jumps into the water to get the catch. If he misses, he returns with the arrow. One morning in May, I followed a young Onge who was going fishing. He was moving along the sea coast in search of fish and was constantly missing the fish he was trying to shoot. We spent the whole morning and some part of the afternoon in this way and we had moved quite far away from our camp. The scorching heat was unbearable and I was feeling extremely thirsty. I requested the Onge youth by gesture to return to the camp and we started the return journey. But all along the way he kept his watchful eyes on the sea. As we approached our camp he noticed a shoal of fish and succeeded in shooting one. I was, of course, very happy at his success. But to my great astonishment, the moment he came out of the sea he pushed the floundering fish with all the saline water on it into my sidebag in which I was carrying two costly still cameras, some films and filters. However, his generous gesture moved me so deeply that I for-

got all the hardships I had undergone and the thought of possible damage that might have been caused to the contents of my sidebag. The boy had valued my company and was apparently very conscious that I had eaten nothing and wanted to recompense me with the only fish he had managed to catch.

Rapport Essential

While on tour in the tribal areas I lived among the tribal people and ate whatever food was available in the locality. I never started my work on arrival, but spent a few days moving about and talking to the villagers through the interpreter, establishing a rapport. I would distribute presents to the children and women to get rid of their shyness and timidness, so that instead of running away and hiding as they usually did when they met strangers, they stopped to greet me with smiles. Soon I became one of them. This acceptance was very important to gain their cooperation for my work.

While I was camping at a Reang tribal village in Tripura in 1959, I had to face a devastating cyclone in the dead of night. I was living in a tribal hut in the village. In the eastern part of India all the tribal huts are built on stilts. My only companion was my orderly. It was about 2 a.m., when the fearful cyclone engulfed the village. The entire hut was rocking because of fierce winds. I hurriedly got up and called my attendant to collect as much of our belongings as he could carry. I grabbed my jerkin and the movie camera which I covered with a blanket and jumped out of the hut. In the lightning that followed the very next moment, I discovered to my dismay, that our hut had been completely swept off with all our necessities inside it. In the blinding flashes of light, we could see a number of big trees uprooted. We stood bewildered and could not move to the village headman's hut as the way was blocked by fallen trees. Just then the rain also came pouring down. I was at a loss to find shelter for the two of us and to protect

the movie camera. Suddenly, we found a number of flambeaus coming towards our lost hut. It was the headman accompanied by some of his men. They were coming to rescue us. The headman took us to his hut and requested me to stay with him till alternative arrangements for our stay were made. He sent a message to the SDO Udaipur about my plight. With his help I could send a telegram to my family asking for some money as the cyclone had rendered me penniless. I also sent a telegram to my office informing the authorities about the awful calamity, but the administration did not care to reply. After two days, when the weather improved, the villagers erected a new hut for our stay and gave us foodstuff. Their hospitality and unstinted help in adversity, warms my heart whenever I think of it.

When I left after two months stay the whole village gathered to give me a ritualistic send off to ensure a safe journey for me. I felt sad at parting from these simple and homely people.

My field experiences were varied and rewarding. Each day brought a new experience. While working among the Cholanaikan of Malappuram district in Kerala in 1977, I was practically living as a caveman and in constant fear of being attacked by wild elephants and venomous snakes. We were three of us there. One of my colleagues was proud of his culinary art and prepared food with locally available roots and vegetables. I, however, swallowed such food with thoughts of the venerable sages who lived on such stuff while doing penance. While here, I had the misfortune of slipping over a boulder and injuring my left knee. It was only on reaching Mysore, after completing my work, that I could avail of medical help

Rough Deal

Field work in different parts of India with such a variety of climates involved great hardships. Being a government

servant I had to face many constraints due to all the rules and regulations by which we are bound. In spite of it all the charm, excitement and the pleasure that I felt after viewing every completed film more than compensated for my troubles.

During the ASIA '72 exhibition at New Delhi I was ordered to proceed to New Delhi to exhibit my films daily at the Rural India Complex Pavilion, though no satisfactory arrangements were made for me nor was I given enough money to stay in Delhi.

Starting on November 23, the film shows lasted about three weeks. On the first day, the Nicobarese film was exhibited and the gathering was unexpected, because the time and location of the show and the name of the tribal film had been published in the local press. My audience were mostly foreigners. I was very happy when I met Prof. Sankho Chowdhuri, his wife and her relatives after the show.

On Sunday November 26, I projected the Onge film. There was an unprecedented crowd that day. However, I was very happy observing the general public's interest in my films even though they were silent. I used to give a running commentary through the microphone. Two more shows of this film were held and I had the same experience that I had the first time. My film shows at the Rural India Complex Pavilion were a great success and I returned to Calcutta in a happy frame of mind.

Soon after, I received an official invitation from the 9th International Congress of Anthropological & Ethnological Sciences to be held at Chicago in September 1973. I applied to the Government for permission but to my dismay, I was informed that permission had been refused. Since no reason was given to me for this refusal, I thought the decision was quite unjust. I felt very unhappy about it for quite some time.

Despite this incident, I served the Survey for another six years and went to Ladakh, Tons Valley in UP and

Kerala to produce documentary films. I produced roughly 42 films for the Survey. I still remember the day I left the Survey, leaving all these films behind which were almost my children and had been part and parcel of my life for 26 years.

Fond Memories

There is one incident in my exciting career which has a special place in my heart. It happened in Little Andamans. The Onge being a nomadic tribe, are in the habit of staying in a communal hut, in groups, for 8 to 10 days at a time and then moving away to another communal hut. A large thatched hall is what represented their village. They are entirely dependent on natural resources for their subsistence. They have no knowledge about agriculture. Wild roots, fruits, sea fish and wild pig are the stuff they depend on for food.

A group of Onge came to stay in a communal hut near our camp at Dugong Creek. An Onge couple from this group became very friendly with all the members of our camp. The couple, who were quite young, had a small child whom they carried tied to their backs. They were given some saltless food from our mess. Soon after, they moved away with their group. A month elapsed and we totally forgot about the Onge couple. Our field work was also almost complete and after three and half months we were preparing to go back to Port Blair. It was in the middle of June and we were waiting for favourable conditions for the ship to come and take us. We were feeling very depressed as our rations were getting depleted.

One afternoon it was drizzling outside and I was in the camp watching the sea in the dim light as the sky was overcast. From a distance I could see an Onge slowly plodding towards the direction of our camp. As the Onge are in the habit of moving in groups, I was wondering why this particular Onge was coming alone and why the per-

son was walking so slowly. One of our members brought a binocular and we saw that this Onge seemed to be carrying an unusual load on his back. When, after about an hour, the slow moving Onge came within eyeshot, we were all astonished to see that they were the Onge couple who stayed near our camp a month ago. The woman was walking supporting her husband, who was almost unconscious, on her back and her only child tied to her chest. All three were completely drenched.

The poor Onge girl had walked quite a long distance in that condition. She slowly laid her husband down and we ran out to help her. The Onge youth was running high temperature. We saw a sharp wooden piece had pierced his left foot from one end to the other and it was abnormally swollen. When the Onge group were staying in the communal hut near our camp, our doctor used to give them treatment whenever any one of them got ill. The girl must have remembered that and carried her injured husband on her back in the hope that we could save him. Her immense effort and perseverence were indeed admirable. This illiterate tribal woman reminded me at that moment of the mythic Sati Savitri who had undergone so many ordeals to save Satyavan, her husband, from the clutches of Yama, the god of Death. Thanks to the proper treatment by our camp doctor the Onge youth recovered quickly and they stayed with us till we left for Port Blair. When we were on our way to embark, the Onge woman kept on saying something. Probably she was giving expression to her gratitude and happiness on the recovery of her husband. Though the language was unintelligible to us, the expression of the woman spoke a universal language which needed no interpreter to understand.

In the 26 years of my service with the ASI I toured throughout India from the Himalayas to the extreme south and from the east to the west of India. While preserving each community's unique cultural identity all efforts should be directed to instil in them a sense of belonging—an awareness that they are an inseparable part of a whole—that is India.

Ashish Rajadhyaksha

The Vital Interface

I

Definitions

Anthropology of liberation?
Liberation for what? *From* what?

Anthropology itself, science for the study of man, has traditionally floundered on the philosophical/ideological question: which man? Do we necessarily have to look at people 'outside' ourselves, study those strange to us? Does the anthropologist/recorder of reality seek to efface his presence before the all-seeing, all-recording science? How can he, when what he sees is fundamentally altered by his presence? When his seeing is itself conditioned by what he expects to see? When the camera/tape recorder are far more 'real' to the person being observed than he can ever be to the observer/public?

For a long time anthropologists, like observers and recorders of our 'cultural heritage', have sought to disentangle themselves from what they see, to keep what is seen free of the polluting gaze of the viewer. Although the assumption is that there is a pristine reality 'out there', which can tell us more about ourselves, we have seldom realised that what we wish to keep pristine is not the people we observe, but our perception itself. Today, as most Third World countries are being turned into modern dumping grounds for industrial waste, this desire to remain 'cleansed' of impurity has become almost obsessive.

'Every time a film is shot, privacy is violated', says Jean Rouch. The observer and observed are locked into a dual struggle to explain each other, to shore up their own mythology by the exchange, by which I mean an economic exchange. In *History and Anthropology* Levi-Strauss says:

> We know that among most primitive peoples it is very difficult to obtain moral justification or a rational explanation for any custom or institution. When he is questioned, the native merely answers that things have always been this way, that such was the command of the gods or the teaching of the ancestors. Even when interpretations are offered, they always have the character of rationalisations or secondary elaborations. There is rarely any doubt that the unconscious reason for practicing a custom or sharing a belief are remote from the reasons given to justify them. Even in our own society, table manners, social etiquette, fashions of dress, and many of our moral, political or religious attitudes are scrupulously observed by everyone, although their real function and origin are not often critically examined. We act and think according to habit, and the extraordinary resistance offered to even minimal departures from custom is due more to inertia than to any conscious desire to maintain usages which have a clear function. There is no question that the development of modern thought has favoured the critical examination of custom. But this phenomenon is not something extraneous to anthropological study. It is, rather, its direct result, inasmuch as its main origin lies in the tremendous ethnographic self-consciousness which the discovery of the New World aroused in Western thought.

We may, then, have to go a long way back before we

can view the object of our liberative search afresh. The Romantics were the fountainhead of modern ethnography: seeking in the Other, in the New World, what they *lacked*. 'Everlastingly chained to a single little fragment of the Whole, man himself develops into nothing but a fragment...instead of putting the stamp of humanity upon nature, he becomes nothing more than the imprint of his occupation or of his specialised knowledge' (Friedrich Schiller, *On The Aesthetic Education of Man*). And, as Levi-Strauss quotes his spiritual forbear, Rousseau: 'When one wants to study men, one must look around oneself; but to study man, one must first look into the distance; one must first see difference in order to discover characteristics' (*Structural Anthropology* part 2).

Today, however, the world has turned a near-full circle. It is the Romantic who fragments the world, to 'fit' it into what is required of it, to replace our struggle to understand what is around us with readymade, centralised perceptions. Nothing has damaged our civilisations more than those who have come to 'put their stamp of humanity' on them. And there is no medium more capable of fragmenting reality, as much into images and sounds as human beings into 'realistic' manners, as the cinema.

As a conscious intruder into peoples' lives and circumstances, as apparently invisible, as the extension of the filmmaker/viewer's senses, the cinema chronicles a history, not so much of observed reality, but of the observer's desire. Jurij Lotman says:

> 'When the viewer has acquired a certain amount of experience in receiving cinematic information, he compares what he sees on the screen not only (and sometimes not so much) with life, but also with the cliches in films which he already knows. In such a case, displacement, deformation, plot-trick, montage contrast, in general any saturation of the picture through the occurrence of super-

meanings, all become customary and expected, and they lose their informativeness. Under these conditions a return to a 'simple' depiction, 'cleansed' of associations—an *assertion* that the object does not mean anything but itself...such an approach becomes unexpected and meaningful (*Semiotics of Cinema*).

Film, rendering unto the world the sensations demanded of it, is permeated with the transparence that all myth possesses. In a situation such as ours in India, where film is *the* carrier of a meta-language that forms urban culture (today along with television), the 'cleansing assertion that the object does not mean anything but itself' has to be undertaken with an understanding of *all* the layers of meaning that have accrued to the apparently transparent exchange. We cannot look into the distance, as Rousseau would have us, because the object is 'dramatically' foreshortened, with background light and lurid colour, holding itself up to fetishist consumption. And with it, all our miserable tags that are now part of everybody's Third World baggage, making us see ourselves as an other to a reality which is all around us, but which we are blind to. 'For the European hunger is a strange tropical surrealism. For us, it is a national shame' said Glauber Rocha. Like the tight close-ups in Tapan Bose's film *An Indian Story* which show the pores of those blinded at Bhagalpur, we make a fetish of our own reality, our shame.

There is no alternative but to re-state the basic terms of cinematic montage, that when we fragment reality we do so through acknowledging what *we* see; and when we *reconstruct* it we also reconstruct all those myths into new practice, that would make us whole again. And though Jean Rouch has spoken about an imaginary filmmaker, making himself invisible with portable equipment, he also spoke of a *participant camera* permitting a shared anthropology that would involve his participants even as he observed

them, and shared with them the practice of making and seeing films.

This process has acquired a distinct political edge. Sandinista activists in Nicaragua speak of a theology of liberation, echoing Paolo Freire's hopes of a new pedagogy of oppression: their filmmakers are similarly attempting an anthropology that would share in the struggle to make and to see, a struggle to come together under new definitions of themselves. Filmmakers in South Africa today find new dignity in the condition of black people through the cinema. In Bolivia, a filmmaker like Jorge Sanjines actually believes that he is merely a social instrument, that the people make *their* films through him. This is not easy; indeed one envies his uncritical belief in his people. We have too many pitfalls before our society can cohere itself, through its mythology and resistance, and unite the observer and observed towards new directions of liberation.

II

The Popular

In the Indian cinema, efforts towards meaningful mediation must be placed against the backdrop of the quite unique functions that cinema has performed over the past forty years. All understanding of links between social formation and cinematic expression must originate in the staggering collapse of popular cinematic form directly after independence.

Before independence, a relatively stable studio system—bringing together, with most capitalist institutions, a feudal joint family structure and modern economic production relations—had evolved some crucial genres. Their exchange with their known audience had brought about an identification which occasionally touched new heights of unity between observer/observed. The ex-

changes wrought in *Devdas* (1935) and *Sant Tukaram*
(1936) permitted social coherences, in the way the hero
'addressed' the people as their conscience, to give new di-
rection to the apparent transparence. The fragmentation
of this coherence, economically and culturally, was ex-
traordinary: within two years of independence the S.K.
Patil Film Enquiry Committee was recording the break-
down of the studio system, and the rise of 'leading stars,
exacting financiers and calculating distributors and
exhibitors' (p. 14). This dislocation of organised produc-
tion relations, amid vast migrations to the cities and a
growing unemployed labour force, resulted in the disin-
tegration of narrative modes: the star became the only,
and most visible, commodity, congealing everything into
the persona as object-for-consumption...

From then to now, it is possible to locate the growth of
the star persona into the actual geography of the urban
slum: economic, religious, regional and caste forces inter-
sect with each other, reflected in territorial divides—e.g.
in Dhanavi the main road/slum lane, the Hindu/Muslim
sections, and the protective roles of slum lords in the area
they command, the Maharashtrian/Tamilian divides into
which are overrun caste distinctions, and then into modes
of dress, forms of 'entertainment', the social club, often the
centre for organised gang meetings, the liquor bar, the
movie theatre, and crucially, modes of *kinship*. It is this last
which I consider most important. At one level the Man-
mohan Desai-created Amitabh persona (*Amar Akbar An-
thony, Naseeb* and *Coolie*) condenses the actual forms of
lumpen behaviour, and through the communal identity
determines the laws within which the hero functions, the
responsibilities he takes upon himself. (Here communal
reference is the most explicit, but it can be 'exchanged' for
class or even caste distinction.) This however is only an
aspect of the contradiction: the one in which feudal laws
of kinship clash with the laws of the state, where the hero
usually has to defend the honour of his clan (the mother)

and has no option but to break the law to do so.

In this, the movies reflect a basic crisis of our urban working class, their refusal to accept a culture that acknowledges their economic condition. In Amitabh's films, a resurgent feudalism constantly triumphs over capitalism that is seen as weak-kneed, irresponsible and unable to look after the people. And as Rajni Bakshi argues in her book on the Bombay textile strike, *The Long Haul*, a militant 'Samantism'—a maverick Lone Ranger adventurism that would begin by throwing down the gauntlet, emphasising the gesture to the extent of ignoring the basic tenets of organisation—held far greater fascination for the workers than e.g. the Marxist unions did. Datta Samant, the outsider rejecting all trade union economism before the call for 'bada kranti' actually at one point asked the workers to return to their villages, which several thousand did. Bakshi points out that almost 10 per cent have stayed there. Even Samant's low rate of success for the many strikes he has masterminded has not affected his popularity. I think this also reflects the difficulties of the filmmaker seeking a language of coherence, either of the people themselves as a community, or in the cinema.

For films do more than merely reflect: even as they shore up the 'extraordinary resistance offered to even minimal departures from custom' (Levi-Strauss) films offer the vital interface—an elusive transparent interface--for the customs themselves to be articulated into new economic conditions. The observer, consuming the object held up for his desire, is cannibalistically feeding upon himself; for the mass-media are locked in upon themselves, having no reference points for the universe of the myth they use other than that of the deprived observer.

This becomes the first problem for the filmmaker: in his struggle towards an anthropology of liberation he/she has to disengage this parasitical hold, and actually forge new relations with myth, let new forms flow into the mediation. This indeed is what Mani Kaul does. Or else, the

filmmaker must radically relocate his political relations with the object, to define new terms of 'making films with the people, rather than about them' (Anand Patwardhan). Patwardhan represents a new kind of filmmaking, not all of which is politically acceptable, but which he himself has fused into a certain form of political/aesthetic practice.

Towards the Cinematic Object

The fragmentation of the uniting popular, at just the time when independence was achieved, splintered identity—artists had access to a political nationalist 'whole' at just the time when it was no longer possible to uncritically identify with an audience. It was the visual arts, the Progressive Artists show in 1948, that first staked the terrain for internationalism; later in the cinema Satyajit Ray was able to fuse the Indian 'whole' into forms of cinema borrowed as much from Jean Renoir as the Italian neo-realists.

I want to focus here on the resurgence of the *tribal* at that time, especially in Bengal, although then M.F. Husain's work for example would include itself as material alternative, as metaphor, as narrative. The Partition has splintered most notions of family, as people had been converted overnight into refugees; as equations between class, mediated through family, and forms of cultural expression began breaking up, artists—as in the Indian Peoples' Theatre Association—turned to the tribal (folk) as still suggesting valid unities across classes. Their success, when it occurred (e.g. as in Nibaran Pandit's political ballads), was because they were remorselessly emphasising the traditions of *protest* in the folk, and via that were connecting with a popular culture that was innocent no longer. Ritwik Ghatak brought a new dimension to the tribal: using the Baul songs as forms of protest, he also sought the base of classical music in them. From the

natural to the classical, the chorus spanned the history of fragmentation itself. He also utilised Marx's assertion that tribal collectives *preceded* the family and that—as in *Meghe Dhaka Tara*—the evolution of form from the folk to the popular is also a division of labour. Karl Marx:

> Within a family, and after further development within a tribe, there springs up naturally a division of labour, caused by differences of sex and age, a division that is consequently based on a purely physiological foundation, which division enlarges its materials by the expansion of the community, by the increase of population, and more especially, by the conflict between different tribes...It is this spontaneously developed difference which, when different communities come into contact, calls forth the mutual exchange of products, and the consequent gradual conversion of these products into commodities... (*Capital* I, pg 332).

As he sought to see what went into political Partition, the interweaving layers of form that were an apparently contiguous history offered Ghatak rich material. From the family, to individuals within it, from the demands made upon them to their own needs, from the group to the mass, these layers revealed a hierarchy. Now annihilating individuals, now echoing ancient archetypes struggling to be born in memory, the constant dialectic simultaneously showed what flows into the *commodity* as it is born, and the possibilities of these wide-ranging exchanges finding terms for each other—the archetype into industrial nature, the folk into the sounds and images of modern refugeehood, the commodity into its classical origins of sculpture and music. As the unstable configurations yielded the processes of their making to the cinema, they found a range of reference points that in themselves formed a history: nature to culture, folk/tribal to indus-

trial, past to future, substance to commodity. As these formed the cinema, it was as though they were realising their own history, taking shape.

Levi-Strauss: 'Thus, a myth which is transformed in passing from tribe to tribe finally exhausts itself—without disappearing, for all of that. Two paths still remain open: that of fictional elaboration, and that of reactivation with a view to legitimising history. This history, in its turn, may be of two types: retrospective, to found a traditional order of a distant past; or prospective, to make this past the beginning of a future which is starting to take shape' (*How Myths Die, Structural Anthropology II*).

Mani Kaul defines his cinematic intention more precisely: he wants to find new integrations between cinema and myth. There is a similarity between the two: both are apparently transparent, as they lead us straight through to the objects they create, both are configured into the 'moment'. Myths have no seeming history to them, it has 'always been thus', they say. And film: 'Your film must resemble what you see on shutting your eyes. You must be capable, at any instant, of seeing and hearing it entire' (Robert Bresson).

In Kaul's films, the two—myth and the cinema itself—*realise* each other; they find a language for each other. The concrete, as industrial process, is rendered immanent with the sheer cosmology of myth, even as myth itself is delivered to history. In *Dhrupad*, the curves and sense of volume is graphically realised, even as the legends of music, their origins in the folk, and formalisation in aesthetic texts come together via film. The sensuous experience actually frees the object itself from the burdens of representation, even as the associations bring divergent histories to bear: in *Mati Manas* the history of the wheel becomes a history of patriarchal institutions, the classical is realised through the immortality of man's creation in his image, the myths themselves juxtapose each other and always find language in film for each other. Earlier in

Satah Se Utatha Admi Kaul had worked on languages—of legend, history, fiction, aesthetics—to find ways of realising their sensuous object in film.

The assertion that the object does not mean anything but itself is necessary in the attaining of the object itself into a new space and time. The irony here is, of course, that in jettisoning most of the 'conventional' (in the Indian cinema at least) associations of objectivity in attempting even a purely cinematic depiction, Kaul implicity arrives at how the object is made, how the social configurations that go into the making of the object may themselves be seen afresh.

The Political Act

Anand Patwardhan has a revealing story that happened during the making of his film *Hamara Shaher* (1985) on Bombay's slum and pavement dwellers. During the height of the slum demolitions programmes initiated by the Bombay Municipal Corporation, Patwardhan was tipped off in advance about a demolition. 'I could have gone there with my cameras and got wonderful, gory footage showing how homes are broken down, how people are rendered homeless overnight. But it seemed so much more important to warn them of what was planned, and prepare them for the demolition' he says.

Making this film for him was a continuation of his work with the homeless of Bombay. His involvement was, and today continues to be, far greater than merely as a filmmaker: he has organised *morchas*, fought legal battles for their constitutional right to shelter, and assisted them through raising funds. This is important for his film: for *Hamara Shaher* is one of the only documentaries in India where the slum-dwellers speak into the camera unselfconsciously, overcoming the till-now mainly exploitative, voyeuristic role that it has played (e.g. in Films Division documentaries).

In *Hamara Shaher* Patwardhan's camera plays the cru-

cial role: a distant, non-intruding, sympathetic presence when it shows the slum-dwellers at work, or at home, in tragedy (as when the baby dies) or in anger, the camera takes on a weapon-like remorselessness when it pictures the local politician visiting, with his hirelings, making promises and leaving in his limousine. It can silently picture contradictions, as when the Municipal Commissioner speaks of a lack of space, the camera meanders around his enormous garden as it follows his pet pomeranian dog. It can move around the enormous contours of a stadium within which a jazz performance goes on, a white woman sings a garbled version of a famous Count Basie standard wearing a sari, and a massive banner for a cigarette says 'Come share the spirit of freedom'. All his images, and editing juxtapositions, are in acknowledgement of the *perceiver* and his responsibilities to his subject.

Patwardhan makes, finances, and edits films by himself or with assistance from friends; his films are distributed through trade unions, students groups and civil liberties organisations. This kind of filmmaking has grown, albeit marginally, since the Emergency. The other films made then, and since, under similar conditions would be Utpalendu Chakravorty's *Mukti Chai*, Gautam Ghosh's *Hungry Autumn* and *Maabhoomi*, Tapan Bose's *An Indian Story*; others that formally resemble these but were made under different conditions of production are several student films at the Film & Television Institute, like Ranjan Palit's *Bhiwandi*, Uma Segal's *Shelter* and Shyam Ranjan's *Alipt* which have also had wide exposure among political activist groups.

Almost all these films follow the famed Fernando Solanas' dictum: 'The camera is the inexhaustible expropriator of image-weapons; the projector, a gun that can shoot 24 frames per second' (*Towards A Third Cinema*). Chakravorty's film, as in his feature films, offers no space for contemplation, banging down sounds on fast-paced camera movements and cuts always with a strident com-

mentary. *An Indian story* offers a mere journalist's casual reportage, glorying in the fact that 'reality' may be thus recorded. In none of these films—with possibly one section in Uma Segal's film that shows 'Mangala's daily fix'— —is there any effort to rescue the people filmed from their condition.

Patwardhan's ability to find cinematic paradigms for his involvement with the issue and the people, remains extraordinary: as does his ability to abstract the plight of the people into a larger political issue (recall the shots of the flaming torches in *Prisoners of Conscience*). He films with an activist's faith, and couples political responsibility with an acknowledged subjectivity of vision. Indeed, the cinema permits him to cohere the universe of his subjects, and he delivers this new coherence back to them in the way he finds for the viewer a place in that universe.

Chidananda DasGupta

The Realistic Fictional Film: How far from Visual Anthropology?

In Mrinal Sen's *Aakaler Sandhanay* (*In Search of Famine*, 1980), a film crew in Bengal goes to a village to re-enact the 1943 famine that had taken five million lives. The villagers get deeply involved with the filmmaking, which disrupts their lives, still lived in penury. Prices go up because the film crew is consuming whatever is left after the main produce of the village has gone to the city anyway. 'They came to take pictures of a famine,' says a villager, 'and sparked off another.'

A local woman is recruited to act the role of a wife who allows herself to be seduced by a contractor from the city, in exchange for some rice. When the scene is enacted, the father of the girl who had earlier agreed to the casting, bursts into a rage and takes his daughter away. In another scene, an actor playing the husband, enraged by his wife's whoring for a handful of rice, lifts up his child and is about to dash it to the ground. The scene, played by professionals, goes perfectly for the director of the film until a local woman in the crowd, a wife and mother, screams and ruins the shot. Eventually, the local schoolmaster persuades the director to leave and to shoot their scenes in a city studio, and the crew packs up.

Seldom has the intervention of the observer in the life of the observed been so drastically construed and so graphi-

cally described. It took a fiction film to expose the realities of the relationship. As the schoolmaster says to the director, 'You belong to the privileged class..... You have tried to impose yourself on them.' In your search for realism, he could have added. The fictional approach enables Mrinal Sen to push the observer-observed, self-and-other divide to its apotheosis, where its roots can be exposed in a way no documentary film or written ruminations of the anthropologist could have. It challenges the filmmaker's pretence to objectivity and lays it bare.

That, in a way, also brings us to the basic difference between documentary and fictional films and their different ways of apprehending reality. One may be said, not altogether simplistically, to concern itself with the surfaces of reality and the other with the reality under the surface. It is questionable whether a documentary of the village shown in Sen's film could have brought out the real relationships and motivations of its representative inhabitants equally well.

For contrast, one can take an anthropological film, *Dadi's Family*, directed by Michael Camerini and Rina Gill, (for the University of Wisconsin), which records the daily life of a peasant family in Haryana. In orthodox, thorough-going anthropological style, the film crew set up cameras and lights and observed the family for months, getting them used to the presence of the (minimal) crew and the equipment. The film is of two hours' duration, yet it reveals the observed only in what might be called a-scene-and-a-half. One is a long, remarkably real quarrel between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and the other a scene of a wife bringing food to her husband in the field and talking to him of their problems and hopes. The second does not come off altogether, although it offers some glimpses of the relationship (hence I call it 'half'). For the rest, all we see are the surfaces of daily life that tell us little about the people they observe so meticulously over such a length of time. Clearly, the family is never totally unaware

of the camera and the real moments arrive only when they unwittingly lower their guard. They reveal something of themselves when they are agitated or when they think their real selves can't be seen in what they are doing. If one were to consider the issue of voyeurism, *Dadi's Family* would prove to be more voyeuristic than *In Search of Famine*. The fictional film is open and direct in its intervention: it makes no pretence of objectivity. The documentary, by staying long with the family, by keeping the apparati set up and ready everywhere, all the time, seeks to be the voyeur, to lull the observed gradually into an unawareness of the observer.

For an inbetween situation, one can take a well-known, albeit old, film—Jean Rouch's *Chronique d'un Ete* (*Chronicle of a Summer*, 1961) made with sociologist Edgar Morin. Rouch is a good example because he began as an ethnographer in the classic mould and, using the camera as a hobby, began to realise its ability to record more than what written tomes could tell us about people. His beginnings in filmmaking were typical too; *Les Maitres Fous* (*The Manic Priests*, 1955) showed possessed Hauka adepts, their mouths foaming, slaughter and eat a dog, reflecting the colonial anthropologist's penchant for recording the strange practices of the colonised and attracting strong criticism for it from the country of the observed. *Chronicle of a Summer's* scene is Paris; it was for a change, home-ground anthropology. Rouch had developed a way of bringing people of different backgrounds together before his camera. He and Morin first went about asking Parisian participants, "Are you happy"? with themselves on-camera; then a number of people are interviewed in detail about their work and their private fears and anxieties. Afterwards, they are introduced to each other before the camera and encouraged to interact. Finally, some of the people filmed are shown the footage in a screening room and their discussions filmed.

'People, perhaps because there is a camera there', said

Rouch, 'create something quite different and create it spontaneously.' He never pretended that the camera was a mere observer; he filmed improvised sequences that set amateur players in fictional situations not dissimilar to those of their own lives. The result was predictable; only where the amateur was a good communicator did the film come to life as in the woman Marilou, who, had she cared, could have gone on to be an actress of note. In other words, the revelations of character and relationship were accidental, meagre in the context of the twenty solid hours' film that he had shot with synchronised sound, which was then a new technique.

Compared to what fiction achieved by way of revelation of individuals, relationships, habits and ways of life in Satyajit Ray's Apu Trilogy (1955-59), Rouch's achievement was sketchy, even though his experiment was interesting, even essential. What Rouch attempted to do by placing amateurs in improvised fictional situations close to their own was, in essence, not all that different from Ray's films, also acted mostly by amateurs and based on Bibhuti Bhushan Banerjee's highly perceptive and basically realistic fiction. The fact that Ray had a rambling, meandering semblance of a plot and a scenario, mostly sketched in pictures rather than written, seemed to have done little to prevent the emergence of a sense of real people in real places and situations acting in ways in which they could have acted in real life. The Trilogy is nothing short of a profound revelation of the changing lifestyles, thinking patterns, evolving relationships of the impoverished middle class of traditional rural India emerging into the urban world of today. There is no pretence over the truth of representation, even though it is imbued with lyricism and compassion not entirely unlike Flaherty's in his documentary *Louisiana Story* (1948). And the dialogue would not, by any stretch of the imagination, attract Flaherty's comment after the first screening of *Louisiana Story* (quoted by Leacock 1986), 'Jesus Christ, did I write that crap!'

'I think *Pather Panchali* is a masterpiece, but I know the young girl didn't really die', Leacock says, 'and although granny looked like she was ready to, I don't believe she really did!' Actually she did, only a few months after the release of the film. The thought that the girl did not really die arises in the mind because there is a touch—the only one, I think—of contrivance in the death sequence; it is a shade too dramatic in its construction. For the rest, where would we get a better picture of 'life in a Bengal village' than in *Pather Panchali* or 'the ghats of Varanasi' than in *Aparajito*? As for strange marriage customs, what could be more strange, and more natural, than Apu's marriage to Aparna in *Apur Sansar* where he becomes the accidental bridegroom, replacing the one who had come for the wedding but turned out to be insane, threatening eternal celibacy to the bride-to-be if she missed the auspicious hour of marriage?

If anthropologists are the 'miniaturists of the social sciences' (Geertz) so are many of the realistic feature filmmakers. Except in some instances of simplistic Marxism, there are no grand conclusions announced in them; they are content to acquaint us with characters and relationships within a community, with sympathy and even participatively, but without prescription. There are many examples of this outside of Ray, who is noted for his non-partisan view of social change in which there are no heroes or villians, and characters and events are part of a continuing process. Elsewhere in this volume, T.G. Vaidyanathan discusses Prema Karanth's *Phaniyamma*. Regardless of what the director may have said about the principal character in her work, the film itself does view both the widows—the old and the young with their different predicaments and perceptions—with equal interest. Vaidyanathan makes an interesting point about the older widow's misogyny arising from psychological trauma. But the director's view need not be seen as partisan. The very fact that she seems to endorse both the older widow's

horror of sex (as TGV seems to think) and the younger's enjoyment of it goes to show a non-partisan view of two streams within the Indian tradition—the ascetic and the life-embracing. The second needs no contemporary rediscovery; of the first there is a living example that has intrigued anthropologists (Babb, 1986) in the community of the Brahmakumaris. This contemporary religious movement with a fairly high visibility advocates celibacy in women. Like *Phaniyamma* it expresses a horror of what Vaidyanathan terms the 'instinctive side of life' consisting of the gore, grime and sheer earthiness of the process of sexual intercourse, conception and birth. The Brahmakumaris believe that in the first half of the 5000-year cycle of creation, human reproduction took place by yogic powers; the second spelt the fall of woman as a result of sex, lust and preoccupation with the body including the act of intercourse and childbirth that they, like *Phaniyamma*, find so revolting in their sheer physicality. Thus the *Phaniyamma* experience is a recounting of an ascetic horror of the human reproductive process that persists to this day and runs parallel to the zest for it so evident at all social levels in India.

Women have provided the focus of the realistic feature film in India's 'new' or 'parallel' cinema to a large extent. The status of woman has often been taken as the index of social change or the country's progress. Aspects of the man-woman relationship have in any case been central to the preoccupations of the fictional film practically all over the world. The conjunction of these two interests have therefore provided a strong impetus to the treatment of the feminine condition in the New Cinema. In this the widow often figures as at once a victim and a symbol of the persistence of traditional superstition and social oppression. Besides *Phaniyamma*, an important example of this is Girish Kasarvalli's film (also made in Kannada) *Ghatashraddha*. Throughout the '70s, the new forces in the Kannada film were obsessed with the problem of oppres-

sive religious institutions in the rural areas. Indeed this aspect has formed an important part of the New Cinema's largely realistic explorations of the tensions of tradition and modernity that Indian society at most levels struggles to resolve within a continued identity.

The socially marginalised widow of *Ghatashraddha* gets drawn into the processes of 'the instinctive side of life' without deliberation, driven by forces too big for her to comprehend. Nature is in conflict with a society that does not forgive transgressions. Unlike *Phaniyamma*, this film does not play up different aspects and attitudes of woman and her bodily processes; it draws a stark picture of one village, one woman, one transgression and its inexorable consequence: expulsion from society. It is a less complex but more relentless film than Karanth's. As such what it reflects is the uncompromising antagonism of its maker to the subjugation and oppression of widowed women, and through them, of all women in the grip of tradition. The understatement of the style only underlines the criticism of the traditional treatment of widowhood. The young Brahmin boy's silent sympathy for the predicament of the woman hints at the inevitability of attitudinal change in the younger generation. Both *Phaniyamma* and *Ghatashraddha* underscore the polarity between the 'commercial' and the 'new' cinema. Stylistically and in terms of content and treatment, the commercial cinema could not have thrown up such products in the period since Independence. Even though it is equally obsessed with the problem of tradition and modernity beneath the tinsel of its entertainment, its resolution of such a situation as *Phaniyamma's* or *Ghatashraddha's* would have come out firmly in favour of the traditional view through some *deus ex machina*—if it treated such a subject at all. Thus the realistic film, despite such sympathies as it may directly harbour, holds up something of a mirror to actual social practices, in spite of its fictional form.

Indeed its fictionality can be seen as a means of creat-

ing, almost like a re-enacted documentary, a simulation of reality in which the camera is accepted as an important factor. The problem of polarity between the observer and the observed is solved by making them equal partners in a single process. In the Frits Staal and Richard Schechner controversy over the filming of *Agnicayana* in Keraia, Schechner points out what is missing in this tremendous exercise in recording and commentary: '.... respect for the contingency of ritual performances and a full discussion of the very powerful contingent circumstances surrounding and profoundly changing the 1975 Agnicayana.... a genre of anthropological game is being played.' The vedic ritual was performed after twenty years, and because of widespread protest an essential element, the sacrifice of 14 goats, had to be dropped. Barely hours before the performance of the ritual, rice cakes wrapped in banana leaves were substituted for the goats. As Staal himself remarked: '....it is not easy to kill rice cakes by strangulation and cut them open to take out particular organs'. To Schechner the film (by noted visual anthropologist Robert Gardner)—and Staal's two volume book *Agni* backed up by tape recordings of the 12-day event—were vitiatied by the input of money: $1,27,207, the cost of the *yagna*, was paid in dollars and rupees by sources outside India. Money, says Schechner 'is a clear indication of where the power is.... the patrons of the ritual (the vedic *Yajamana*, who takes part in the event) were not Indians but foundation officials.... the 1975 Agnicayana existed because it was to be filmed and scholared.' The only person in the film crew allowed near the bird-shaped altar, it seems, was Kunju Vasudevan, a Brahmin with a Bolex. In other words, the intervention of the filmmaker and the scholar in the event changed the event itself and this aspect was glossed over by Staal and Gardner in the book and the film (*Journal of Asian Studies*, February 1986 and February 1987).

The 'observational' model of visual anthropology finds an occasional, if rare, reflection in the fictional film. A uni-

que filmmaker like G. Aravindan turns its lack of statement into a form of eloquence: he is able to create resonances and metaphors that expand within the mental space of his audiences even though what we see is a series of unimportant, undramatised events. An itinerant rural circus troupe with a few ordinary acts, moving from place to place, are observed in detail, with a rare reverence. Aravindan's work is imbued with a sense of the sacredness of life; every face is as a portrait of evanescence, every action, no matter how minute, becomes a sacrament. There is a well-known actor, Gopi, in the film, but he merges into the troupe. What Aravindan requires of his actors is, in his own words, 'behaviour, not action'. The observation of behaviour as a flowing rhythm that obscures the deliberate elements of filmmaking—the camerawork, the organisation of material, the editing. The film is neither dramatic in its transitions, nor is it the observation of bacteria under a microscope. It does not in Jhala's words, 'reduce human societies and their environments to human laboratories in which change and progress are to be controlled by the observers and the dominant culture'. Indeed Aravindan's most remarkable trait is that his own high culture never intrudes into the observed, much less dominates them. A film like *Thampu* may in some ways, at least in terms of style, be considered the best kind of visual anthropology—the kind we seldom see in the more official, academically approved versions of it. By comparison, Akos Ostar's film on the *charak* festival in Bishnupur (West Bengal) is, for instance, a highly impersonal, "scientific record" in which the feelings, motivations and attitudes of the observed are obscured by the observer's emphasis on the accurate presentation of surface events, i.e., by the very lack of artifice.

The advocacy approach has been in evidence in the segment of Indian cinema we are concerned with here, as frequently as the observational. In fact the advocacy often borders on the inflammatory, sometimes the demagogic.

A successful, restrained and yet angry example of it is in Govind Nihalani's *Aakrosh* (*Cry of the Wounded, 1980*) A young Brahmin lawyer takes up the case of a tribal accused of killing his wife but is unable to make headway; although innocent of the crime, his client maintains a stubborn silence throughout the film. At first this seems stupid, but as the film progresses we discover its reason. Speech will cost him even more than silence; it will bring retribution on his aged father and his young sister from the very combine of power and money that had raped and murdered his wife.

'*Aakrosh* is a searing indictment of this system and the society which it sustains. The indictment is made without rhetoric, without sloganeering, without table-thumping propaganda. Is made quietly, lucidly, systematically and, mostly, non-ideologically.' (Anil Dharkar)

The subject of the Muslim minority's problems in India has always been a sensitive area but never more so than immediately after Partition, for those who had chosen to remain. M.S. Sathyu's *Garam Hawa* (*Hot Winds*, 1975) is to this day the only film that touches this raw nerve. Other films sanitize the Muslim community, showing only the decorative aspects and isolating individuals from their context to turn them into saints. Sathyu concentrates on one family's predicament and its conflict with Hindus as also the pulls towards Pakistan which it finally resists. Structurally removed from the documentary, it nevertheless portrays a community's anguish in very real terms.

Almost all of Shyam Benegal's films are concerned with particular communities, and succeed in revealing something about them. From *Ankur* (*The Seedling*, 1974) to *Trikal* (*Past, Present, Future*, 1986) it is a series of studies of relationships within and between communities. Two of them, *Manthan* (*The Churning*, 1976) and *Susman* (*The Essence*, 1986) were participatory to the extent that the community paid for them: a milk cooperative in the case of the first and a community of weavers in the second. Both show

a singular ability to make fiction out of documentary material without compromising the complexity and basic truth of the material. Technical fluency plus an extraordinary penchant for good casting and for the structuring of material make the films dramatic without being too fictional to be true. A remarkable sureness of feeling for people and places in this prolific filmmaker enables him to overcome some elements of contrivance in the mix of drama and documentary. With Benegal we reach the frontiers of documentary and fiction and get the feeling that beyond this point, the portrayal would cease to be recognizable.

The question that arises in my mind after this brief examination of some of the feature films offered at this seminar and the position of the New Cinema is: visual anthropology (to quote Jhala) broadly speaking, 'is the study of mankind, employing as its principal instrument of investigation the camera;' what is left of it as a discipline after we have seen the realistic fictional film and the documentary film and the skills of major photographers? In India, the body of work of high quality done in these three media, mainly since Independence, is quite considerable. The fact that the authors of this voluminous material have not seen it as 'visual anthropology' seems to be of little importance.

In developing visual anthropology in India as a discipline in itself, one must recognize the fact that there is not a very great deal that the serious, realistic Indian filmmaker, feature or documentary, has to learn today from the West in terms of technique or style. As far as the content goes, he is intensely interested in bringing out the conditions of being of his fellow Indians, even in small, neglected communities. The Indian mind today is—one is not speaking of the mindless here—deeply involved in self-exploration, identification with its own people, and the betterment of their lives in their many incarnations and manifestations, large and small. In this respect

India's New Cinema (mostly realistic) is sharply different from the consumerist existentialism of cinema in the West and of India's own popular films. It causes a separation of the study of mankind through the camera from the constant concocting of sensations—aesthetic or visceral, voyeuristic or participatory—based upon the material of human actions and emotions. As soon as such a separation takes place, we have a crying need for visual anthropology, because then the fictional film avoids reality and the documentary is marginalised. When Pare Lorenz's films became popular and Roosevelt wanted his government directly to support such filmmaking, the American film industry was up in arms and Congress cut off this governmental bid to enter the preserve of private enterprises.* (Barnouw, 1974). Later the 'Direct Cinema' movement in the U.S.A. remained mainly peripheral both to the film industry and the corridors of power.

In India, on the other hand, the serious and realistic New Cinema, although inconsequential in all-India box office reckonings (despite a fair amount of success within regional-linguistic limits), has a very high profile. It is largely sponsored by government; although it frequently bites the hand that feeds it, it is showered with honours. With its high national and international visibility, it retains an ability to influence opinion-leaders and decision-makers inspite of its low box-office takings.

From this point of view, Indian cinema has done better than Italian neo-realism which was influential but very short-lived or the French *cinema verite* which never gathered much steam and *nouvelle vague* which offered sharp observation of the French middle class in many films but never compared with the influence of India's social critiques on the country's decision-making classes.

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*This is not to deny that private enterprise in America has produced outstanding feature films with a fine sense of reality in dealing with the underworld, with war and many other areas.

T.G. Vaidyanathan

Phaniyamma and the Triumph of Asceticism

Prema Karanth's *Phaniyamma* has been widely received as striking yet another blow at the decaying corpse of tradition. And, indeed, there is plenty in the film (particularly in the Dakshayini episode towards the end) that lends plausibility to this view. More, the M.K. Indira novella itself bristles with iconoclastic dicta directed at the shackles of tradition—some put in the mouth of its eponymous heroine and some issuing from the author herself. Iconoclasm has so often been the stock-in-trade of the socially marginalised classes (and of late, it seems, of the upwardly mobile classes as well!) that it has ceased to have any shock value whatsoever. Masti's Sheshamma and Shivaram Karanth's Mookajji (both widowed, like Phaniyamma, before their prime) come at once to mind. The latter, in particular, with her dubious archaeology and mystical visions is presented as a repository of wisdom 'unfettered by traditional values.' And thus does Karanth succeed in turning the grim tragedy of a woman literally beaten into submission into a transcendental triumph of Indian womanhood. In Phaniyamma, too, an identical process of idealisation is at work leading inexorably to the apotheosis of the heroine. But Phaniyamma, even more than Mookajji Kanasugalu, reveals the other, darker side of the picture: the human cost of it has to be

paid for the usual triumph and shabby martyrdom. The film, in particular, lays bare the psychosexual roots of Phaniyamma's scorn of tradition by locating its origins in a disgust with the very mechanisms (menstruation, copulation, marriage, childbirth, etc.) that sustain and nurture life.

The film opens with the groans of a woman in labour (the pains, we are informed, have been going on for four days) and it is left to Phaniyamma of the 'healing touch' to work the miracle. Her skills, hitherto, have been post-parturitive—not those of mid-wifery—but she goes through the necessary motions, oiled hands and all, with that dour, unsmiling idealism that is to remain her permanent trademark. An ever so slight revulsion does snake its way to the surface but one could put it down to her inexperience and so wholly justified under the circumstances. It is only in the scene that follows that we get a different picture altogether. After ritually cleansing herself in a 'holy river', Phaniyamma reflects inwardly on the nature of women who persist in 'going' to men even after such travail as we have just witnessed. The entire episode is found in the novella (Chapter XI, p. 69 passim) and since Indira's treatment of it is rather more explicit, I take the liberty of quoting the relevant passages (the translation is by M.U. Jayadeva).

> Once when (Phaniyamma) was staying with relatives at Konandur, she came to know of an untouchable girl having trouble with the delivery of her child with no mid-wives to help. Her help was sought as she had very small hands.
>
> Overriding the objections of the people in the family, she went there. As directed by others she was able to extricate the baby. Blood flowed in profusion. A shock ran through Phaniyamma's body. She thought, 'God, how dirty is your creation. You saved me from this ugliness. No matter if it made me a widow'. She remembered Subbi

and Puttajois. 'Why this human life? God, if I am to have another life, make me a flowering tree. I have not sinned in this life. I don't want any more lives.' After exhorting them not to tell anyone that she had delivered the baby she went back. She was fed up seeing the rumpus made by that mass of blood-and-flesh. 'God, what is this *maya* of yours? This suffering, this ugliness, and still women forget them and go near men. What strange forgetfulness? And still they breed ten-fifteen children. I don't want any more human life. And certainly not the life of a female.'

This passage occurs more than midway through the novella but the film plants the episode at the very head and front of the narrative. It establishes at least four major themes that will recur in different keys through the whole body of the film.

They are (a) the revolting process of childbirth; (b) the shamelessness of women who persist in their folly by breeding prolifically; (c) disgust with the entire human condition; and (d) the misfortune of being born female. Reinforcing this misanthropy concerning childbirth, indeed following it, is the spectacle of the brahmin changing his sacred thread (the Indira novella, by the way, does not link the two episodes in any way). Initially Phaniyamma can make nothing of what she sees but on being enlightened by that worthy's wife, she is led to reflect on the inequality of the sexes and on the irrationality of traditions. Both the opening episodes of the film then—the pains of childbirth and the brahmin's sexual peccadilloes--trigger off the same scorn of tradition in Phaniyamma. A wholesale rejection of sex results—both inside and outside marriage—with its necessary corollary of a rejection of tradition as well. (Not surprisingly, the Indira novella ends on a note of unqualified triumph for the Phaniyamma weltanschauung. Going to deliver yet another child, and given her disgust at these things, such

an act of seeming benevolence can only feed her tireless and gargantuan masochism. Phaniyamma is accompanied by Premabai—a Christian—who is apparently so dazzled by our charismatic heroine that soon, she not only gives up eating meat but holy matrimony as well!) Total sexual abstinence then—the oldest inhabitant in the musty cupboard of Indian culture—is surely the ideal preached not only in the book but in the film as well.

We read the film wrongly by paying overzealous attention to the Subbi-Dakshayini episodes without realising that they are fundamentally refracted to us through the commanding and enclosing framework of Phaniyamma's consciousness—the Subbi episode wholly so and the Dakshayini story perhaps only partially so. But their fundamental meanings, given the bracketing, cannot be autonomous but only derivative and parasitic on the Phaniyamma value–world. Let us take a closer look at the Subbi–Puttajois episode because we will discover how it is organically linked in Phaniyamma's mind with the horror not only of sex but also of childbirth. This discovery is essential if we are not to persist in the delusion that Phaniyamma's broadsides against tradition are the result of some quiet rational enquiry into their foundations. Her rejection of tradition, on the contrary is wholly irrational (and given her illiteracy this is but inevitable) and has its origins in a psycho-sexual neurosis that is precipitated when she witnesses what, following Freud, we will describe as the Primal Scene. (Of course, it would have been clinically far more accurate to have a teenaged Phani witnessing this than a woman so much more advanced in years. In the novel she is a ripe forty—a terrible mistake, I think—but in the film she is—given that expert transition at the well—at least meant to be much younger.)

Let us reconstruct the episode. After the return of a weeping and barren Subbi—her husband having spurned her—things start to hot up with the arrival of the irrepressible Puttajois. A series of beautifully executed scenes

(and none more so than the taut and witty 'grinder se-
quence')—Prema's favorite and mine as well—with its
teasing riddles and phallic symbolism) leads inexorably to
the midnight rendezvous of the lovers. Soon their noctur-
nal revels bring Phaniyamma to the window and she
watches transfixed (the novel adds to the gore by disclos-
ing that Phaniyamma was menstruating during this
scene). Her reactions are finely calibrated and L.M.
Sharada misses none of the nuances of this difficult scene
whose importance was brought home to me by none other
than Adrienne Mancea of the Museum of Modern Art): a
naive if mounting curiosity (as Puttajois entreats his mis-
tress) travels rapidly to a steady plateau of wide-eyed
bewilderment (the lovers now begin to embrace) before
abruptly rising to the crescendo of an overwhelming dis-
gust (as the bedding begins). Unable to look any further
Phaniyamma plops down and buries her head in her
knees. The glass of water she resorts to now is—as my wife
has suggested—not symptomatic of any incipient sexual
desire but of an over-mastering unpleasantness that she
has to literally gulp down. The morning after reveals the
true scale of the trauma. Drawing water from the well,
Phaniyamma looks rather querulously at Subbi (Sharada
is quite simply marvellous here) who is busy recollecting
her midnight rapture in tranquility. Phaniyamma's men-
tal reactions as given in the film are: 'This is the story of
Subbi who grew up before me. I never had a man in my
life and I have to sit before a man (now). It is more vulgar
than the Puttajois–Subbi affair.' (In the Indira novella
Phaniyamma's physical revulsion from the act of sex is
even stronger after witnessing the Subbi-Puttajois coup-
ling but it is in no way linked with her decision not to sit in
front of a barber). But let us make no mistake:
Phaniyamma's refusal of the ministrations of the barber
is not to be construed as her first act of rebellion—as
Adrienne Mancea, with her typical Western notions of
subjugated Indian womanhood, told me—but springs es-

sentially from her newly–developed physical revulsion from men. It is more a rejection of sexuality and men (with its necessary corollaries of 'marriage, initiation, pregnancy, childbirth, worship, purity'—the words are from the Indira novella) rather than of tradition.

The Dakshayini episode, too, as treated in the film only reinforces this reading. True, almost the first thing that Phaniyamma does after the newly-widowed Dakshayini falls weeping into her arms is to repeatedly caress her hair. But surely it is not its impending loss that can be worrying her! After all she herself sat through her own ordeal stoically—leaving it to the barber to shed a few tears. What worried Phaniyamma is 'Why should a grown-up woman sit in front of a barber *scantily clad*' (italics mine). In the Indira novella clearly Dakshayini is not the formidable stalwart, the awesome Kali-like figure that she is in the film and hence Phaniyamma's plea that she should be allowed 'to eat and play as she wants' makes better sense there than in the film where it sounds downright ridiculous). Revulsion from physical proximity to man is Phaniyamma's ruling passion in life and it is this that acts as a solvent of those traditional ties that bind men and women together. Otherwise her outlook remains quite traditional and she approves of Dakshayini's remarriage (to her brother-in-law) chiefly on the grounds that the property will remain within the family. Significantly, Dakshayini's morning sickness is staged after Phaniyamma has left the house. We can be sure that had Phaniyamma witnessed this it would have provoked the now familiar nausea in her just as much as the earlier spectacles of childbirth and copulation. In this respect, at any rate, Phaniyamma's sexual education in the film is rather incomplete!

Unfortunately Prema Karanth seems insufficiently aware of the conflicting fields of force of her three principal women and so plays them all up simultaneously. And so we have a kind of Laurentian paean to sex in the Subbi-

Dakshayini episodes and at the same time Phaniyamma's near-ascetic revulsion seems to merit the authorial sanction. There should have been conflict but this is the cinema of idealism and Phaniyamma's is the overarching and commanding consciousness, in fact, the synthesis reconciling no doubt, in its own fashion, the warring claims of the barren Subbi on the one hand and the all too fertile Dakshayini on the other!

And it is her shining example that the film celebrates both at the beginning (when she is likened by Sinki's husband to a 'rishi') and at the end in that dazzling Kambar lyric. This haunting song (in marked contrast to the Bendre epigraph of the Indira novella which talks of the tragedy of 'a naive artless maiden' who languished 'suppressed and smothered') is not only celebratory but also an act of anguished affirmation of Phaniyamma and her entire way of life—especially its closing lines ('Let there be a thousand thorns but let there bloom one flower, O God, among them') In other words, all hardships borne by Phaniyamma (as a result of the rigours of orthodoxy, what else?) are to be written off if such a flower-like human being like her can emerge from them. When I asked the author of the song, Dr. Chandrasekhar Kambar, about this he smiled and said 'The song is probably sung by a man (unlike the earlier 'Runner' song) because this brings out the latent sympathy of the oppressor for the oppressed!' It is also the 'secret admiration for Phaniyamma by the male-dominated society of her times.' Agreed. Only if we grant this secret admiration, it will make nonsense of the brave, instinctive defiance of tradition by both Subbi and Dakshayini—particularly the latter. Will such women never merit celebratory lyrics? But our viewpoint character in the film is Phaniyamma (it is her story, remember?) and it is her values that get endorsed finally. Prema Karanth herself told The City Tab recently, 'Every woman should be like Phaniyamma.' Not like Subbi or Dakshayini, mind you, but alas, like Phaniyamma! And

so a lordly and withering contempt for tradition results, and of course, this readily fits in with the positivistic temper of our times where the reigning orthodoxy is defined by 'A Statement on Scientific Temper.' But all social traditions are not necessarily crippling and some may even turn out to be guardian angels of the instinctive life. There is, in fact, a belated recognition of this truth in the film (and this surely is a measure of its strength and its undoubted claims to greatness) in the spectacle of a now happily married Dakshayini (with kumkum, mangal sutra, bangles, et al) and her husband participating not only in domestic chores but also in a religio–social festival of lights which clearly involves the entire village community. (It is another measure of Dakshayini's relative freedom from the Phaniyamma value-world, Dakshayini who had openly proclaimed her right, 'to give water to an untouchable.' For Dakshayini—like her mythological counterpart—has both a destructive and a benign nurturing side). But this precious insight is soon forgotten and buried ten fathoms deep in the film's terminal query to the audience 'Nature may do wrong sometimes, but this tradition.......?' And so we return to a wholesale slaughter of traditions instead of a measured critique of them. What I have been struggling to establish in this essay is, I hope, by now clear. A critique of social traditions has to start from the instinctive side of life if it is not to end in the Phaniyamma kind of sterility and sexual asceticism. In scything our remorseless and 'rational' way through the thicket of native traditions we may unwittingly inflict untold damage on the very springs of life. It is well to remind ourselves occasionally of Santayana's dictum that reason may be the differentia of the human condition but never its essence or basis.

Iqbal Masud

Images of Islam and Muslims on Doordarshan

In this essay an attempt will be made to discuss the images of Islam and Muslims as appearing on Doordarshan. The period covered will be, generally speaking, 1980 onwards as it is in this period that the visual bombardment of the Indian television audiences began (compared to the black and white muted display of the previous period). As a preliminary, a brief discussion of the theory of television as communicator and of the rise of TV in India is necessary.

In an issue of *Daedalus* a few years ago (Fall 1985), Michael Tracy asked, 'Is the interesting thing about TV not what it *imposes* but what it *taps*?' He was defending international TV (meaning American and European TV) against the charge that it constitutes a 'poisoned chalice' which is slowly drugging Third World populations and destroying their traditional cultures. Put that way—and it has been put that way by Third World Information Order people—the charge sounds absurd. The *Daedalus* article goes on to suggest that there may be universal pleasure giving qualities in a serial which is intrinsically American, like *Dallas* just as there are such qualities in Chaplin's comedies which no respectable intellectual would challenge as 'dominating culture impositions'. If Chaplin—or even Bunuel, as some enthusiastic experimenters have found out—can give pleasure in Bengal and Karnataka villages, why not *Dallas*?

This case is plausible. The cry of Third World media experts about the First World media is ridden with clichés and contradictions. Dhiren Bhagat reporting on the August–September 1986 NAM summit in Harare pointed out that the Zimbabwe media blacked out Iranian Premier Khomeini's demands for the expulsion of Iraq.

Such contradictions are understandable. The theory of mass media enticement has had a chequered history. First, there was the hypodermic theory of mass media which attributed to it the ability to hold the interest of the alienated urban individual. Later in the '60s we had the little effects theory—TV was only one factor among many influencing a culture. The third stage came under the influence of McLuhan and other schools. The big effects were now emphasised. TV was sheer presence: it was a 'gatekeeper' and an 'agenda setter.' It was a text creating reality itself.

In India, the present position is a mix of all these viewpoints plus added complexities of its own. The viewer alienation is not so pronounced, the Indian culture is not on the point of collapse as is the Graeco-Roman Christian culture of the West (in psychological, if not in legal–economic–political terms). But the Indian culture is not homogenous, its diversity has the potentiality both for co-existence and for conflict. When this multidimensionality spills over into politics then the ruling dominant classes have to look for methods of persuasion other than coercion. Herein lies one of the determining factors of both TV hardware (physical instruments and proliferation of outlets) and of software (content).

To be specific: India is a bourgeois – capitalist state. Its governance is modelled after Westminster/Capitol Hill. But the actuality of power-relations is different: There's a much stronger central government (than in USA) and the power at the Centre has been held by one party and more specifically by a loyalist group in that party since independence. Despite lip-service to socialism the Government re-

mains committed to the maintenance of capitalist growth—specially after the 1985 budget. The 1985 budget was a thrust towards high consumption corporate capitalism.

Current Ideological Thrust

It's important to grasp this current thrust of politico-economic ideology if one is to discuss Indian TV and the 'image' of the Muslims on it with any degree of coherence. The issue has been correctly posed by TV critic Todd Gitlin: 'Every society works to reproduce itself and its internal conflicts within its cultural order, the structure of practices and meanings around which the society takes shape.'

The contemporary mass media in the U.S. are one cultural system promoting that reproduction. Ideology is relayed through various features of American TV – TV programmes register larger ideological structures and changes. The question is not what is the impact of these programmes but rather a prior one, what do these programmes mean?*

That's the question I propose to ask of Doordarshan programmes—particularly with reference to its portrayal of Islam and Muslims.

But first the structural background. Doordarshan is of course, a Department of the State. Which means that nothing in obvious contradiction of the current state ideology is going to get on the box. However, the situation is not black and white. For instance, after nearly three years of soap opera 'revolution' one can discern certain important features. One, there is a ruling group-approved filtering down of entertainment and message. The producer/director has to get his project approved by a government appointed panel and, therefore, has to work within gov-

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*Television: The Critical View, Ed Horace Newcomb, Oxford University Press 1982.

ernment parameters, written and unwritten. Second, there is a link with the consumer industries through ad-agencies. Most of the big sponsors are multinationals. Some of their top executives are themselves American-influenced/trained media men who will never forget the nexus between art/entertainment and cash effectiveness. Three, the mix of political authority plus commercial self-interest determines the format of soap opera; the episodic pattern, the quick drama; the instant laughter and tears; the slick but safe posing of issues; the facile resolution. The very format of Indian TV soap opera limits what can be said: it limits alternative ways of expression. The same description applies to all other programmes of Doordarshan.

To use Gramsci's concept, Doordarshan does not coerce but through 'hegemony' it dominates the thought, common sense, lifestyles and everyday assumptions of its viewers. 'Commercial culture does not *manufacture* ideology: it *relays* and *reproduces* and *packages* and *focuses* ideology that is constantly arising both from social elites and active social groups and movements through society' (Todd Gitlin). The usual programmes (serials, concerts, utsavs, debates, *Focus, Newsline, Janvani*) are performances that at the deepest level rehearse social fixity; they express and cement the obduracy of a social world impervious to substantial change. Doordarshan programmes, like most TV programmes, have a high degree of predictability and obsolescence. They match the products of a high consumption society.

TV in a capitalist society, Todd argues, will finance and choose programmes that will most likely attract the largest conceivable audience of spenders. Another expert TV watcher, Stuart Hall, remarks: 'Good television is essentially *majority* television (emphasis added); that is for an audience composed not—as it almost certainly is—of different groups, with cross cutting minority interests, but as a large, undifferentiated, homogenous mass'.

Emphasis on Homogenising

This is the crux of the matter as far as the representation of a minority, the Indian Muslims, is concerned. They are not affluent enough to attract business group sponsorship which can take up programmes 'serious' enough to do them justice. Second, the political slant of the Indian ruling class—whether Right, Centre or Left—is such that 'Muslim interpreting programmes', (I mean serious, not cosmetic ones) are considered divisive. The only 'divisiveness' that Doordarshan is prepared to tolerate is that which can be encompassed within soap opera or historical documentary parameters. Both the economic interests of the Indian bourgeoisie and the political interests of the Indian ruling class require that the Muslims be brought within the 'undifferentiated' and 'homogenising' mainstream.

This thesis requires empirical elaboration. Before this it would be illuminating (*a*) to furnish a few examples of how ethnic groups are dealt with on American TV and (*b*) certain historical difficulties in effecting a less distorted representation of Indian Muslims on Doordarshan. My reference to American TV is not a digression. Like our Doordarshan the American networks operate within the structure of a liberal capitalist democracy where the emphasis is on getting people into the mainstream. To do this one has to construct (*a*) a cultural mainstream and (*b*) stereotype those who fall out of it. Construction of mainstream is largely an 'invisible' consensual process. But construction of stereotypes is visible and can be monitored. A brief reference to American networks' potrayal of blacks and of Arabs will be useful.

Till the black TV saga *Roots* (1976) came along, the blacks had either provided comic relief or instances of rock-like loyalty. Stories about racial conflict were either side-tracked or bleached. But in 1976 the smash success of the mini-series *Roots* seemed to change the rules of the

game. Briefly, the blacks could be re-admitted through prime time's front door. But then followed the catastrophic *King* which slammed the door again. The show did so badly that the networks took it as an excuse not to do any more movies about contemporary racial issues.* Black dramatic serials went out of favour because the networks felt that most versions of black reality would divide the mass audience. 'It's a white country and a commercial business' said ABC's Stu Samuels. Todd Gitlin adds:

> By the early '80s the networks were quickly retreating to a sort of racial self-censorship that the enlightened Seventies were supposed to have abolished.... The quest for the surest possible maximum audience explains why the networks are cautious yet, in their limited way, pluralist at the same time. Executives want to play it safe, but there are two important qualifications. They are not expert at knowing just how to play it safe. And if they succeed in playing it too safe, they may bore their audience to the point of indifference. From these qualifications flows whatever diversity the networks maintain. The quest for the off-beat, high demographics and prestige, sends them after new material; then the quest for the mass market clicks in, flattening that new material.
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> I think the above passage is very important for consideration of Doordarshan's treatment of groups outside the mainstream.

The Arabs once had a sheikh image in Hollywood movies: dashing, chivalrous, womanising but withal a virile and romantic race. With the coming of the oil crunch of 1973 all that changed. The Arab became a rampager, a greedy hedonist, a clown and a terrorist rolled into one. In their forthcoming book, *Camera Politica*, Professors Doug-

Inside Prime Time by Todd Gitlin, Pantheon, 1985. Page 180.

las Kellner and Michael Ryan of the University of Texas at Austin write of 'the racist potrayal of Arabs as greedy capitalists, in corporate conspiracy films'. According to Jack. G. Shaheen in *The Journal of Popular Film and TV (1984-86)*, on Hollywood Arabs, feature films depict Arabs as super-hedonists (*Protocol* etc.); five films (includ ing two TV films) offer Arabs as terrorists (*Delta, Force* etc.); and nine films include Arab caricatures (*Down and Out in Beverly Hills etc.*). Only three films—*The Little Drummer Girl, Beyond the Walls* and *The Ambassador*—contain balanced portraits. A significant aspect is that Egypt, a leading Arab country, was shown in a favourable light after it became pro-U.S.

There is one more significant aspect. As journalist Edward R. Murrow said, what the viewers do *not* see is as important as what they *do* see. Filmmaker Moustafa Akkad (*Lion of the Desert*) noted: 'I have never seen a smiling Arab on the screen, a sincere smiling Arab, a loving Arab, never!'

There are many points in the U.S. Cinema/TV depiction of the Arabs which are relevant for an examination of Doordarshan's depiction of Muslims.

The representation of Islam and Indian Muslims on Doordarshan is certainly not of the order of the treatment of blacks and Arabs on American TV. At the same time it is wary and stereotyping. The question arises: Does not Doordarshan stereotype *other* communities and ethnic groups? The answer is that it does. But there's a difference. Most other groups fall under the broad umbrella of Hinduism and their representation (if not entirely undistorted) is certainly done with an inside knowledge and a degree of spontaneity. The other non-Hindu groups (e.g. Christians and Parsis) do not, for historical reasons raise the problems the representation of Muslims does.

The historical reason for this may be summed up in the words of Prof. Aziz Ahmad, an authority on Indian Islam:

The development of Islamic culture in India is as

much a regional formulation of universal Islamic culture as a response to the tensions arising out of its tenacious persistence for survival, its fear of submergence and the compromises it made from time to time in the overwhelmingly non-Muslim environment of India... Hindu and Muslim religions, civilizations and ways of life coexisted together for well over a thousand years, undergoing alternating or simultaneous processes of mutual attraction and repulsion. Neither attraction nor the repulsion constitutes the whole story, which is interwoven in an infinite pattern of points and counter-points.*

The modern separatism starting from 1857 added complications. The British first encouraged the Hindu middle classes, then the Muslim. European Oriental studies led to the rediscovery of Hindu and Muslim traditions by those communities. Each developed its own mechanism of revivalism and apologias. Hindus and Muslims alike began to give up many practices which they had imbibed from one another and which had formed bridges between the two communities. The Partition drove the final wedge between the communities.

Image Lacks Credibility

As far as the representation of Muslims in the mass media is concerned, two tendencies are apparent: (*i*) increasing ignorance of the day-to-day life of common Muslims; (*ii*) increasing wariness about attempts to convey the reality of that life to non-Muslims in view of what is perceived as Muslim 'prickliness', or their 'fierce' sense of separate identity.

Post '47 popular Hindi cinema marked a shift from the stereotype of the Muslim as Shahenshah (King-Emperor)

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*Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1964, *Preface.*

Pukar (1937), etc.—to Mianbhai (a term for lower middle class Muslims)—*Coolie* (1983). This corresponded to the social and economic changes among Muslims after Partition. (The details of the change are elaborated by the author in an article 'From Shahenshah to Mianbhai)'.*

Broadly speaking three ways of looking at 'The Muslim' emerged in Hindi popular cinema which later pervaded the TV (*a*) The Passé Stereotype: the Nawab, the Zemindar, the Aristocrat speaking impeccable Urdu, living in an Indo-Saracenic ambience. This type appeared in scores of 'Muslim Socials'—*Palki, Mere Mehboob* etc., and in TV serials like the one of *Wajid Ali Shah* and *Wah Janab*. There would be crises like dowry, decay of the family, mistaken identity because of purdah etc. (*b*) The Lumpen Stereotype—dacoits, smugglers, upstarts which appeared in films of the '70s and '80s like *Ahimsa, Ganga Aur Sooraj*. The apogee of such films was reached in *Coolie* (1983) where Amitabh as Iqbal, a railway porter, rose to great heights in proclaiming revolution and fighting crime. (*c*) The Leftist way of looking at the Muslim. There are not many feature films from this angle apart from *Garam Hawa* (1973). But there are a few documentaries and some TV films which have attempted to look at Islam and Muslims from a progressive angle.

Let us look at Doordarshan's representation of Muslims and Muslim culture under the following heads:

1. News
2. Religious and cultural programmes
3. Current affairs
4. Documentaries
5. Serials

1. *News*: There is little obvious representation of Muslims in the News. The only occasions they are presented *en masse* so to say, is on the two Ids. The TV representation of the Ids contains some interesting features. First, there

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*_Express Magazine_, November 16, 1986.

is the presentation of Muslims in serried ranks at the Id-gahs. Obviously, this is meant to show the importance of the Ids. But such a presentation can have another quite un-intended effect. Certain sections of Hindu middle classes are in mortal fear lest the Muslims overtake them in numbers because of plurality of marriages. The detail-ed camera survey of large Id crowds will merely enhance such a fear. To put it briefly, the cultural aspect of Id (what it means to Muslims) is overwhelmed by its crowd aspect.

The cultural aspect is generally restricted to showing (*a*) the Mecca Haj (pilgrimage); (*b*) Hindus and Muslims embracing each other; (*c*) sermons or talks (*d*) dinners (*e*) qawwalis etc. Item (*a*) may have the negative aspect refer-red to above as lakhs of people are shown milling round the Holy Ka'ba. The other items smack of 'tokenism'. There is no real attempt to grasp the cultural essence of the function and make it both pleasing to the believer and enlightening to the non-believer. This is an extremely dif-ficult task but we are not even attempting to travel in that direction. Take for instance the Doordarshan reporting of Ramzan Id on May 28/29,1987. The Maliana (Meerut) massacre had taken place only a few days earlier. The Delhi Jamma Masjid had been closed. The Muslims all over India were in a state of shock. But Doordarshan was not to be denied its pound of flesh. By discreet editing and framing, it made the crowds in Idgahs appear passable. It showed well-fed Muslim ladies gorging themselves on sweets. It brought on a qawwali. All of this was like a dance among skeletons. That, at any rate, was the general Muslim perception.

The reporting of communal riots would be farcical, were not the occasion so tragic. About the Maliana mass-acre Doordarshan gave the figure of killed as seven when almost all dailies were placing it between 80 and 100. It faithfully reported the results of the administration's ef-forts to whitewash the massacre (first week of June 1987).

In conclusion, it can be said that Doordarshan emphasises the mass religious aspect of Muslim life. In the last 40 years day-to-day Muslim life has changed. There is a relationship of that change to economic and social development in the environment of the Indian Muslims. Young Muslims are coming up in some walks of life, they are going down in others. There is a germinating Muslim women's movement. Little of this finds reflection in the News. As was said before, what we do not see is as important as what we do see.

2. *Religious/Cultural Programmes*: Under this head fall detailed coverage of Meelad-i-Nabi (the Prophet's Birthday) processions, Majlises (the Passion of Imam Hussain), religious discourses, mushairas, qawwalis, etc.

There has been a substantial increase on Doordarshan of the showing of religious programmes and processions of all religions. I do not regard this as an unmixed blessing. In fact all this is in obvious contradiction to the Government's professed secularism. My considered opinion is that in the present circumstances such programmes are likely to fan the flames of communalism. This is an innovation of the '80s and an unwelcome one.

The cultural programmes—mushairas and qawwalis—are welcome. Of course, in theory they are not Muslim but Urdu programmes. However, Partition has drawn the coverage of the two terms closer. But one point has to be noted. In the last two years, the mushairas have become cultural five-star affairs with the camera roving over ranks of affluent audiences. The rich community life which a mushaira breeds in actuality is missing. The same is the case with the qawwali. Time was, when in Doordarshan (at least the Bombay station) qawwali programmes, both the performers and the studio audience showed clear traces of its popular origin. But the qawwali, like the mushaira, is being yuppied up. On June 1, 1987, a programme of light music was telecast from Delhi. The last item was a man versus woman qawwali. In Bombay halls,

or in the open air, it is great fun, stylised repartee being the order of the day. In the chastely decorated Delhi TV studios with an invited haute bourgeoisie in attendance, the poor *mohalla* qawwals were lost. The audience was bored. Obviously, they thought: So this is Muslim culture!

It is cultural ignorance which prepared this ambience for the qawwali.

3. *Current Affairs*: Two separate but connected developments engaged the Muslim mind in the Eighties: Communal riots and Muslim Personal Law. As far as I am aware there was not a single debate—I mean an informed in-depth, serious debate about communal riots in the '80s on Doordarshan. This single absence has lost Doordarshan credibility in the minds of millions of Muslims.

As far as Muslim Personal Law is concerned, there was *one* debate in 1985 on *Newsline*. Compered by M.J. Akbar, it became a battle between two formidable pugilists-Arif Muhammad Khan and Shahabuddin. This was in line with the combative journalism of *Newsline*—get two opponents into the bull-ring and let them fight it out. There was no woman involved in the debate, no reference to the social-political-economic ambience of Indian Muslim Personal Law. Subsequently, there was a feature on this subject but it consisted of interviews. There was no explanation/discussion of Muslim Personal Law which was comprehensible to the Muslims themselves.

Current Affairs by extension can include Indo-Pak cricket matches. The detailed Doordarshan coverage both of five-dayers and one-dayers during 1986-87 was one of the most important contributory causes to the rising communalism of that year. Imran and Javed Miandad became dark satans in the Indian cosmogony. This was reflected in a demeaning reference to Javed Miandad in a popular film *Hukumat* (1987).

4. *Documentaries* about prominent Indian Muslims are apt to be pious, hagiographic and homogenising. For instance,

Dr. Mulk Raj Anand said about poet Iqbal that he had rejected Islam as Nietzsche had rejected Christianity (*Profile*: Prod. Kunwar Sinha, Nov. 10, 1980. Bombay TV). More recently, Doordarshan showed three documentaries on Tippu Sultan, Maulana Azad, and the poet Ghalib in February 1987. The Tippu documentary was the best of all but it spent too much time trying to prove the secularism of Tippu. The Azad documentary (Feb. 22, 1987) was shown at 11.30 p.m. after the World Table Tennis Championships. No one but an Azad fanatic would have watched it. The documentary was mostly an in-depth discussion of Azad's two massive contributions to Indian culture—his enlightened Quran translation interpretation and his literary classic, *Ghubar-i-Khatin*. The greatest disappointment was the Ghalib documentary. There was certainly an element of academic excellence (short statements by valued critics). But Ghalib was very much a man of the people. He should have been brought alive by a reference to his letters and a good musical rendering of one of his lovely lyrics.

As I watched these documentaries, my reaction was: Here is some official manfully fulfilling his quota of Muslim programmes.

5. *Serials*: It is the serials which give the greatest scope for Muslim images. Both the record running soap operas *Hum Log* ('83–'84) and *Buniyaad* ('85–'87) contained the obligatory good Muslim. In *Hum Log* he was a brave, honest Muslim Police Inspector standing up to corrupt politicians; in *Buniyaad* he was a loyal Gandhian and legal adviser to the businessman, Lala Vrishbhaan. The effect of this tokenism is as if Doordarshan was saying: you know there are good Muslims too.

Two recent serials *Zindagi Zindagi* (first half of 1987) and *Kala Jal* (May 1987 onwards) have Muslim women and their tribulations caused by personal law and social-economic circumstances as central themes. There are no revealing insights. But even setting down lives of ordinary

Muslim women, though in an amateur fashion, is an innovation for Doordarshan.

Doordarshan has so far failed to evolve a credible or felt image of the Indian Muslim. The reason is that few of the artists or officials at the top have live experience of Muslim life. It would be unrealistic to deny that there is, in a deep cultural sense, such a life which links Kashmir to Kerala, Maharashtra to Bengal and Assam. When and how will this life be reflected on Doordarshan?

There are three requirements: One, there must be an informed and aware Government policy decision. Two, we must have committed people at the production level. Three, we must have artists with both vision and knowledge.

MAN IN MY FILMS

Someshwar Bhowmick in interview
with Mrinal Sen

Someshwar Bhowmick   Mrinalda, we have seen a variety of human situations in your films—man as an individual, man in relation to his family, in relation to his community, to society, man as a political entity and man living on the fringe of mainstream society. What is the basis of your enquiry about man?

Mrinal Sen   In my own small way all I can tell you is that the flashpoint of my creative work has always been man in a particular situation. I never care for, initially at least, which class I am going to portray. I've tried to throw a man in a particular situation and tried to see his reactions and in doing so I've tried to imagine myself in a situation like that. Since I am in the thick of my reality and I have a storehouse of my own experience and the experiences which I observe in others, all that I have to do is extend my own experience intellectually and try to get into their experiences, their situations and put the situations in a proper perspective.

S.B.   What about the milieu?

M.S.   After I have pinpointed my man—the protagonist—I try to recreate a whole history about him. I wish every face in my film should project something about history.

After seeing *Kharij* someone told me in Cannes, 'I can see something outside the frames' and he went on to explain, 'Even though the entire story is about Calcutta I should still see a village economy completely shattered. [This] I could see through the faces of the father and his

son.' That indeed was the spirit. The father [of the boy who dies] was symptomatic of the history of our village economy.

I feel a strange rapport with villagers and their milieu, even though basically I am part of the urban tradition. Of course I have not inherited this tradition. I have, however, imbibed it and become a product of urban culture, which is miles ahead of our feudal culture. Still my roots are in the villages and these are very deep too. And probing villages and exploring the lives of the villagers from one's urban point of view have been great fun. Specially when I have tried to portray family situations in villages. In our urban culture families are breaking, family ties are being snapped. But I can't forget that we all wanted to live together. Still you can't stop families fom breaking. It's inevitable. It is a social force which I don't regret. Rather I am also contributing to this process of change, I am growing and creatively taking part in it. Still I can extend my experiences backwards and show a joint village family, where the father and the children subsist on the same plot of [agricultural] land. I have that sense of history. You recall my *Matira Manisha*—the patriarch's joint family breaking up gradually. I showed it without taking sides. I wanted to show the whole process with respect.

Villages and villagers have played a vital role in some of my other films also. In *Baishey Shravana* I examined the changing family ties with the 1943 famine as a backdrop. To show an empty bowl was not important for me. The most unfortunate and gruesome casualty in 1943 was the liquidation of human decency and dignity. In 1977, I went to a village to do a film on rural proletariat (*Oka Oorie Katha*). Again in 1981, I turned villageward but the situation was qualitatively different then. I went there with a set of urban people and probed the village on the one hand and also probed the urban people in a village setting. I set up my examination in this way because I felt my experiences about the village had suffered, my ties weakened due to passage of time.

But I have always felt at home with the middle-class milieu to which I essentially belong and for which I have intense love and passion. I want mainly to confine myself to this milieu..

S.B. You started off with an examination of the man-woman relationship within this milieu....

M.S. I rate this relationship as the most vital one. This is one relationship that is elemental, on which rests the whole fabric of our society. I have also felt that to understand my own time better I would have to understand this relationship deeply. In choosing this subject as my starting point, I wanted contemporaneity to be reflected in that relationship. The time was fast moving, conventions were changing, attitudes were changing too. The strongest effect of it all was on the man-woman relationship. True, my frame of reference was marital relationship—this was because I had felt that in the prevailing social situation I had to deal with post-marriage relationship in order to explore the man-woman relationship in its proper dimension. But my focus was always on the changing ethos of marital relationship in the post-war period, the stress and strain it suffered from within and the effects of extraneous factors [in *Punascha, Abasheshey* and *Pratinidhi*]. Of course there were other relationships, both social as well as family ones, that enjoined this basic relationship.

S.B. *Akash Kusum* first deals with a pre-marital relationship....

M.S. I could afford to be a little bolder, around 1964-65. Times had changed radically by then. Still the girl didn't have a proper characterisation in it. The boy was the central character and the girl was just the foil—she did'nt come up as a full-fledged character, she came up as a symbol. However, here my focus was on something else, on the possibility of breaking the wealth barrier. Still the love theme provided an adequate perspective. And on top of that I tried to show the character of a middle-class family.

S.B. In *Bhuvan Shome* we find a strange relationship developing between the bureaucrat and the village belle who stand worlds apart.

M.S. You're right. I'm projecting a man who is leading almost a dead man's life, in complete isolation. My job was to bring him out of his own world and throw him in an alien world and see how he felt and behaved. He got outsmarted at every step, completely so by the girl. My business was to play fun with the funny business of bureaucracy. But you're right—somehow a relationship evolves between the two, a relationship encompassing warmth and affection, something which cannot be defined—but it is not just a relationship as between a father and his daughter.

S.B. But you have not confined yourself to examining relationships, not even in a middle-class milieu.

M.S. In *Ekdin Pratidin* I put the value-system of our middle-class to severe test by withholding information about the girl who didn't return home one night. People were eager to know her whereabouts during the period of her absence. But I wanted to depict the chain of events in a fashion that more pressing events would overtake her and her family before she had the chance to narrate her experiences. Elaboration would have diluted the whole situation. *Chalchitra* examines how certain members of the middle-class declass themselves while going up the rungs of the social ladder and how there is an erosion of values simultaneously without their knowledge. *Kharij* examines yet another facet of middle-class reality. It shows how their ostrich like existence blurs their vision and conceals their limitations from themselves. When something terrible happens, do they realise their locus standi, and also how they have been insensitive to others' needs?

S.B. All the while you seemed to be receding into the inner soul of man, irrespective of his milieu. *Khandhar* perhaps epitomises this trend best.

M.S. Yes, *Khandhar* is about soul-searching. People have been

apprehensive about the capability of the mother in facing the reality which was far removed from her long-nourished fantasy. Actually I find this chemistry interesting—one's coming across some stark reality and reaction thereabout. And this experience is vital for us all because from there we can collect courage, and steel ourselves.

I also felt that the film would remain incomplete if I did not bring the photographer, my protagonist, back to his own world. He has been a prisoner of circumstances, but he must return to his place and by doing so he will be enriching his own experiences. This is perhaps how he'll be able to look forward.

People have complained that my recent films ended in despair. But don't you see an inner strength hidden behind this apparent despair? This is what keeps you going, which keeps you looking beyond, which keeps you dreaming. And what remains at the end is not despair at all but desperation—man has to exist, by all means. And that is one step forward.

S.B.   Do you say so in *Genesis* also—in some different milieu however?

M.S.   *Genesis* is like a fable—simplistic, elemental. Each of the characters there represents a class—they don't come as individuals. I have tried to capture man in his elements. But it's all in abstraction. I've tried to tell: a world built or gained is but a world lost, to be regained, to be rebuilt, Genesis over again.

S.B.   This then is a remarkable shift from your political phase?

M.S.   People have thrust upon me the tag of a political filmmaker. I myself have never claimed such a distinction. True I was completely taken in by what I saw then (1970-71) in Calcutta, around myself, and I think nobody could escape it. It was too strong a situation and perhaps my reactions were too spontaneous. True, I declared then that I was not ashamed of using films as a propagandist's pulpit. But I wanted my films to be emotionally valid.

S.B.   You mean you explained a set of human phenomena from a human angle?

M.S.   Absolutely, and based on my own experiences. In fact, in making films, I've been pushed by my own time and I've also tried to provoke my own time.

S.B.   Why did you change gear then?

M.S.   I wanted to touch the inner soul. We've for long been busy with the exterior facade of man, we don't want to travel within. I have felt the time has come for me to seek solitude and to do a little bit of soul-searching. It is not self-castigation at all—it is like asking myself a few questions about my integrity. This is what I have felt is my political responsibility.

S.B.   So the main thrust of your enquiry about man stems from a middle-class value-system. Does it not limit your flexibility?

M.S.   Look, I can't wish away or ignore my middle-class roots and existence. And I do face difficulty with this value-system, especially in regard to milieu or characters which are removed from the parameters of my known middle-class existence. See, the point is to know your characters intimately and from within. It's not just the physical features that will suffice, but you've got to know them at that level in which the arrow will seem to be quivering into their flesh. Also you have to grow respect for the situations you've placed them in. It all depends upon your knowledge, experience and outlook. I think I've had a varying degree of success while going outside the middle-class milieu. I have never portrayed a significant capitalist character. In *Calcutta 71* the capitalists were portrayed rather obliquely, in a sort of collage—something from abstraction, something from slogans. These have been punctuated by certain concrete images which I myself have seen. But I avoided a full-fledged characterisation. Whatever little I've portrayed about proletarian characters has not at all been satifying, e.g. in *Ek Adhuri Kahani,*

I had missed their core. I have, however, portrayed peasantry with a certain degree of confidence and conviction. In *Parasuram*, I've tried to understand a new value-system that is emerging within the community of rural labourers migrating into the metropolis. It was not an easy task, especially in respect of the character which Sreela [Majumdar] portrayed. I would even say that it was for the first time in the history of Indian cinema that viewers accepted the situation of a fallen woman quite respectfully.

S.B. How do you rate *Mrigaya* from an anthropological point of view?

M.S. I frankly tell you I haven't been able to capture the complexity of tribal life. Because of my lack of knowledge and lack of experience about their life-style; and partly also because of a faulty narrative, ironically the handiwork of a founder-member of the Communist Party in Orissa. The main exploitation in our social life is political, economic. Still in our literature we go by some strange tradition in which a villain had to be a womaniser. But this is to me a secondary exploitation—a derivative of economic exploitation. Yet I have fallen prey to this tradition whereas I should have confined myself within the parameters of economic exploitation. I maintain that the backwardness of our primitive people stems from some economic factors.

S.B. Perhaps that is the reason why you have not used scenes of rituals.

M.S. Every tribal ritual stems from some fertility cult which was relevant to their ancient community life, society and economy. But that relevance is lost today. They themselves are aware of this. They carry on with some of the rituals just out of habit but without conviction. These are nothing but sport today.

S.B. So how do you prefer to look at a tribal community?

M.S. I will look at them in relation to the tremendous technological advancement that has taken place the world

over. I'll not be looking at them as a museum piece. I've used ruins in many of my films, because ruins have fascinated me all through. But I look at the ruins as a contemporary phenomenon. So is the case with the tribal people. I should be able to place their rituals in their proper historical perspective. Verrier Elwin's National Park theory is outmoded today. But there are people, filmmakers included, who cultivate a neo-Verrier Elwinism. My question is, why should we over-emphasise the rituals which have lost all their ancient implications?

S.B.   How do you rate your films as the source-material of visual anthropology?

M.S.   I wish, through my films, through visuals and designs, I could stimulate anthropologists in building contemporary history or in recreating history—the contemporary history which is governed by the attitudes, emotions, relationships (economic, social, political et al). Of course it is up to an anthropologist to pinpoint the material of his interest. But I feel I've served my own time throughout my career—I've acted according to the dictates of my time but I've never been a slave to it. A visual anthropologist will find another thing: the transformation that a story, written at a particular period, based on a certain period, goes through in my film—because I make that film in a different period, changes inevitably creep in without distracting from the historical accuracy. That comparison is not only interesting, it is valid too.

Indeed it is upto an anthropologist to see how [far] my films have been able to project contemporary attitudes—implanted in my films, governing their growth. If he feels sufficiently stimulated by my films to attempt a probe, I'll be happy. I feel, however, any creative worker, whether he is in cinema or in some other medium, has to be some kind of an anthropologist.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Madhavan Kutty in interview
with Adoor Gopalakrishnan

Madhavan Kutty As a filmmaker and visual artist you are concerned with the form, perfect or imperfect, of people and their landscape. The colonial sensibility reacted to this in terms of curios and 'finds'. Obviously your perceptions would differ. Do you seek a new aesthetic ideal in the bodies and background of subject people?

Adoor Gopala Krishnan Yes, I am very much concerned with the form and physiognomy of people and naturally the look and feel of the environment too. It is not just because they look interesting or cute, thus serving an end in itself but for reasons beyond the apparent. For me they become the basic means in my effort to externalise an internal process.

M.K. If so, can you briefly recall such specific instances of the decolonised aesthetic ideals in your films?

A.G. As I am not an outsider to the people and the social milieu I am portraying, it is difficult for me to take the approach of a 'discoverer'. The attitude an artist develops to his subject has to emanate from an intimate understanding and identification rather than plain wonder or curiosity or even enchantment arising out of a chance encounter. What I am involved in, I think, is not sheer recording of reality as it exists on a peripheral level. In fact, my endeavour as a filmmaker is to get at the essential character and composition of a reality rather than its superficial account. I think the treatment of people and their social

milieu in *Kodiyettam* and *Elippathayam* and to a great extent in *Mukhamukham* would substantiate my claim.

M.K.   In music for example the colonial anthropologist considers the raga as a stage before harmony as in Western music. Somewhat like the place of anthropoids before homo erectus. This makes the raga a temporary stage in music's evolution towards its rightful place and destination in harmony. The raga in this view is incomplete and evolving. Are there specific ways in which you touch this aspect of traditional culture in your art?

A.G.   This approach is very typically colonial. The Western concept of harmony is something that has never been aimed at or attempted in our musical tradition. Obviously, Western and Indian music have developed in different directions. To see raga as a stage in the evolution of music towards the ultimate status of harmony is erroneous and it smacks of a total disregard for cultures that are distant and unfamiliar.

M.K.   When any interpretation of traditional social orders concludes with the possibility that these systems possessed a shrewd sense of themselves and of the real world around them this conclusion is often described as insufficiently objective and poorly distanced. How have you combatted this fundamental ethos of contemporary scholarship?

A.G.   The world, to an artist, is the world he has perceived himself. The element of subjectivity is something that cannot be segregated from a work of art, however much it is rooted in, and inspired by, real characters and genuine situations. The expression of true art is in terms of essentials and this frugality per se gets one to the core of the matter. Here there is no room for generalisations and ostentation. Austerity is the word. Primitivity and civilisation, backwardness and progress—all these concepts tend to lose their meaning. True art, while being, asserts itself at the elemental level and the universality of its signifi-

cance transcends the boundaries of communities and cultures.

M.K. Has the Indian cinema made conscious efforts to break away from the colonial aesthetic principle?

A.G. I think the new Indian cinema, starting from Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* and extending to the latest worthwhile productions in the different regions, is engaged in this endeavour. Important filmmakers of contemporary Indian cinema are asking questions relevant to themselves and to the society they live in. A kind of soul-searching, looking within oneself, is on. And it has often resulted in an awareness and realisation hitherto seldom seen expressed in our cinema.

M.K. Do you feel that in the art and industry of cinema as it evolves naturally, the aesthetic autonomy of the Malayalis tends to get swamped?

A.G. This has not happened yet. It could become a possibility only when the Malayalam speaking people of this country turn a deaf ear to genuine works of cinema in their language. It is also to the credit of the filmmakers that they have so far not shifted their loyalty to the vaster pastures of Hindi cinema in keeping with the trend discernible in other regional films of the country.

M.K. You are more of a feature filmmaker than a documentarist. In your feature films, do communities appear merely as the inevitable backdrop for action or are they one of the consciously employed factors?

A.G. Basically my films are about the nature of interaction between the individual and the society. As a natural corollary to this, the communities portrayed in my films are not mere backdrops against which characters of an artificially devised plot enact their predestined roles. The themes of my films, as they occur to me and as I develop them, are drawn upon the life lived by a particular society I have known and am part of. The language, speech, rituals, cus-

toms, food, faith, philosophy, land, climate, art, superstitions, heredity, mythology, folklore, tradition, sex, sorcery, learning—every element of their living has a contribution to make to the whole.

M.K.   The Malayali milieu consists of several communities deeply rooted in Malayali culture. As a Malayalam feature filmmaker, while choosing your themes, what are the implications of this aspect for you?

A.G.   I proceed from my own perceptions. As I do not engage myself in 'picturising' stories, I have to necessarily develop an intimacy with my subject as a first step. This process naturally precludes the treatment of anything that is unknown or unfamiliar to me.

M.K.   Will you agree if your first three films *Swayamvaram*, *Kodiyettam*, and *Elipathayam* are classified as studies of individual psyches within this context of the Hindu community and the fourth film, *Mukhamukham* as a study of the Hindu psyche within the context of the revolutionary community in Kerala?

A.G.   Both *Kodiyettam* and *Elipathayam* are in a way studies of individual psyches although it is more austere and intense in the latter. I agree, *Mukhamukham* is basically a study of the social psyche, but not particularly about the Hindu community. I have of course used the Hindu cultural innuendos to touch upon the sensibility of my audiences and also to point to the inner contradictions and conflict of the questions involved.

M.K.   How do you react to the long-standing trend of filmmakers projecting certain communities as 'types'—humorous, villainous, etc? What effect do such portrayals have on the social sensibilities of viewers?

A.G.   It is not a welcome trend. Maybe those who resort to such shortcuts in characterisation hope to gain easy character identification and thereby instant popularity too.

'Types' also predetermine the treatment of a subject. The audiences at large feel very much at home when the film that unreels before them conforms more or less to the fixed image of what they are already familiar with. Anything at variance with this should create problems of assimilation and acceptance. The aesthetic sensibility of the audiences gets blunted by such constant exposure and in course of time they become incapable of sensitive response.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

SURAJIT SINHA was Director of the Anthropological Survey of India from 1972-75 and Vice-Chancellor of the Viswa Bharati University, Shantiniketan, from 1975-80, and is at present Director, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. He has taught anthropology at several universities including Calcutta, Chicago, Duke and Berkeley. From 1953-56 he was a Fulbright-Smith-Mundt scholar, and has been President of the Indian Anthropological Society, Calcutta, since 1968. His major publications include *Science, Technology and Culture (1970). Cultural Profile of Calcutta* (1972), *Tribes and Indian Civilization* (1982).

CHIDANANDA DASGUPTA, eminent film critic and writer, founded the Calcutta Film Society along with Satyajit Ray in 1947, and was its Hon. Secy. for twenty years. He has contributed over 400 articles to both English and Bengali newspapers and periodicals, and his books on the cinema include *Cinema of Satyajit Ray* (1980), and *Talking About Films*, (1981). In addition to being a member of numerous national film committees, he is a member of the International Federation of Film Critics. He has directed and produced *Dance of Shiva*, and a film on the dancer Birju Maharaj. His literary works include a short novel in Bengali, and an English translation of the Bengali poet, Jibananda Das.

RAKHI ROY was a visiting filmmaker for the Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, in 1985, and the principal guest speaker of an ethnographic film series on India held at Harvard University in 1984. She has also been a visiting filmmaker for the Cinema du Reel, Paris, the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and Nippon Audio-Visual Productions, Tokyo. Her publications include *Big Men Privileges*, and *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*, among others.

JAYASINHJI JHALA is Tutor in Anthropology at Harvard University, and has been a guest lecturer at the Royal Anthropology Institute, London, and the Indian Space Research Organisation, Ahmedabad, among others. His films have been shown at the Magaret Mead film festival, New York and other international ethnographic symposiums. His publications include *Rethinking Visual Anthropology (Anthropologia Visualis)*, *The Bharvad Predicament (Cultural Survival Quarterly)*. He was a member for India on the Commission on Visual Anthropology of the IUAES.

KUMAR SURESH SINGH joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1958 and is the Director-General of the Anthropological Survey of India. He has published several papers and reviews, and is the author of numerous books amongst which are, *Duststorm and Hanging Mist, Birsa Munda and His Movement in Chota Nagpur* (1983), *The Indian Famine,* and *Tribal Society in India: An Anthropo-Historical Perspective* (1985).

K.N. SAHAY is Professor of Social Anthropology in the Department of Anthropology, Centre of Advanced Study, Ranchi University, and Visiting Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla. Dr. Sahay acted as Co-Chairman (1973-76) of the Commission on Visual Anthropology of the IUAES and organised the first International Symposium on Visual Anthropology in Delhi, 1978. He also organised a symposium on Spiritual Anthropology in Canada in 1983, and is presently writing a book on the subject.

S.K. CHATTOPADHYAY was cameraman with the Anthropological Survey of India for over 25 years, and has made 42 documentary films on the lives of Indian tribals. He worked as cameraman with Sir Ralph Izzard of the BBC to produce films on the Santhal, the Ho and the Juang. After retirement he shot three documentary films—

Siniolcho Expedition in Sikkim, Pancha Kedar & Badrinath in UP and *Durga Puja in Calcutta.* He has independently produced a documentary film on the life of the Siddi, an African community settled in Saurashtra, Gujarat and is presently producing an ethnographic film on the Padam Adi, a tribe from Arunachal Pradesh, for Calcutta Doordarshan.

T.G. VAIDYANATHAN is a guest lecturer at the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune and divides his time equally between films and literature. His articles have appeared in leading Indian newspapers and journals.

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IQBAL MASUD (F.G. Jilani) is an eminent journalist and film critic. He has served on film juries in India and abroad, and at present is a regular correspondent for many Hindi and English magazines.

ETHNOGRAPHIC FILMS FROM FILMS DIVISION

Sl. no.	Title	Subject	Producer/ Director	Year	Duration	Projection	Colour and Black & White
1.	*Bhorer Alo*	Struggles and achievements of a tribal girl, based on a true story.	Produced through Shankar Ghose, DCM	1982	60 mins.	16 mm	Colour
2.	*Charakku*	Depicts a traditional way of making utensils.	Production K.K. Garg Director Om Prakash Sharma	1982	41 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
3.	*Durga*	Celebration of Durga Pooja festival in Bengal.	Purchased from Ranen Chatterjee	1982	10 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
4.	*Carry the Colour Along*	Tribal problems of North East India owing to modernisation.	Produced by M/s Devjani Chaliha & Ass.	1982	13 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
5.	*The Garos*	Life of the people in the Garo hills, Meghalaya	Purchased from Dilip Dutta M/s Twin Films Cuttack	1982	10 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
6.	*Jewel of Manipur*	Cultural developments in Manipur post 1972.	Produced through M/s Jagat Murari Producers, Pune.	1982	17 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
7.	*Mizoram Today*	Life of the Mizos.	Produced through M/s Hari S. DasGupta Productions	1982	19 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
8.	*The People of India —Anglo-Indians*	Contribution of the Anglo-Indian community, post independence.	Produced through M/s Fali Bilimoria Productions	1982	22 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
9.	*Ek Dulhan ki Maut*	Depicts the evils of the dowry system.	Produced by Smt. Saraswati Devi film by Hari Atma	1982	17 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white

Sl. no.	Title	Subject	Producer/ Director	Year	Duration	Projection	Colour and Black & White
10.	Gift of Love	Explains the social attitude towards dowry.	Directed Meera Dewan Production K.K. Garg	1982	17 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
11.	Bhavai	Depicts the dying folk drama of Gujarat.	Director Girish Baidya Production P.B. Pendharkar	1981	16 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
12.	Swar Sangam	Propagates the concept of national integration through music.	Purchased from M/s Prasad Productions Pvt. Ltd. Bombay	1981	9 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
13.	A Song for Birsa	The life and times of Birsa Munda tribal leader of Chota Nagpur who fought against feudal landlords & the British in 19th century.	Purchased from M/s Celluloid Century, Calcutta.	1981	18 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
14.	Art in Metal	Depicts the metal workers creativity.	Purchased from M/s Twin Films, Cuttack.	1981	10 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
15.	Crafts of Goa	Traditional crafts of Goa.	Produced through J.S. Bandekar	1981	10 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
16.	Imprints of Tradition	The use of different mediums in village folk art.	Produced through M/s Arora Films, Bombay	1981	18 mins.	35 mm 16 mm	Colour
17.	Region of Harmony	Life in the Andamans.	Produced through Shri. Santi P. Chowdhary Calcutta	1981	18 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
18.	Vanishing Marionettes	The art of puppetry and marionette theatre.	Produced M/s Silpa Bharati Publicity, Bombay	1981	18 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
19.	Yesterday, Today and Forever	The churches and different Christian sects in Kerala.	M/s Television Films of India, Bombay	1981	14 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour

Sl. no.	Title	Subject	Producer/ Director	Year	Duration	Projection	Colour and Black & White
20.	*Faces after the Storm*	Communal disturbances in Bihar in May 1981.	Director Prakash Jha Production Yash Chaudhary	1981	19 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
21.	*Indian Talkies*	The growth of Indian Cinema over the last 50 years.	Director Yash Chaudhary Production N.S. Thapa	1981	22 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
22.	*Muslin Khadi*	The life of the 'mulmul' weavers.	Donated by Khadi & Village Industries Commission, Bombay	1981	12 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
23.	*They Call me Chamar*	Intercaste marriage between a Brahmin and a Chamar girl.	Director Loksen Laluani Production Mushir Ahmed	1980	19 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
24.	*On to Bhutan*	The people and culture of Bhutan, and India's contribution to their development. Production S.N.S. Sastry	Director Girish Vaidya	1978	14 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
25.	*Patachitra*	The scroll paintings of tribal communities.	Purchased from Shankar Ghose, Calcutta	1980	17 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
26.	*Why all this?*	The impact of communal violence on citizens.	Produced Mushir Ahmed Director Samiran Datta	1980	2 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
27.	*The Badias*	A wandering community of Assam who make their living by catching poisonous snakes.	Purchased from M/s Chan Enterprises Bombay.	1980	16 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
28.	*Chhatisgarh*	The culture of Chhatisgarh.	Director Y.N. Engineer Producer Om Prakash Sharma	1980	13 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour

Sl. no.	Title	Subject	Producer Director	Year	Duration	Projection	Colour and Black & white
29.	*Rhythms of the Eastern Region*	The progress made in the North East regions of India.	Producer Vijay. B. Chandra Director Prem Vaidya	1980	16 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
30.	*Quicksand*	Portrays the stigma of bonded labour.	Produced through M/s Durga Khote Productions Bombay.	1980	21 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
31.	*The Magic Hands*	Depicts the making of cane, bamboo and grass handicrafts.	Produced through M/s Little Cinema, Calcutta	1978	11 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
32.	*Boatmen and the River*	Life of the Professional boatmen of Bengal, The Manji.	Purchased from Bimol Roy Productions	1963	13 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
33.	*Close to Nature*	Life of the Bastar tribals.	Produced through Shyam Benegal, Bombay	1968	18 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
34.	*Dhokra*	The Dhokra tribal community of Burdwan District, Eastern India.	Purchased from M/s Look Publicity, Calcutta	1968	19 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
35.	*Gaddis*	A shepherd tribe of Himachal Pradesh.	Produced through M/s Issar Films, Bombay.	1970	20 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
36.	*The House that Ananda Built.*	Portrays an Oriya family in Mayurbhanj village.	M/s Fali Billimoria Productions, Bombay	1967	21 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
37.	*My Land My People*	People of Nagaland.	Production & Direction Arun Chaudhary	1969	30 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
38.	*Our Original inhabitants*	The distinctive cultural patterns of various tribes.	Production M. Bhavani Direction Mohan Wadhwani	1953	10 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white

Sl. no.	Title	Subject	Producer Director	Year	Duration	Projection	Colour and Black & white
39.	The Totos	Depicts the customs of one of the smallest tribes in India.	Producer— Calcutta Film Society	1968	14 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
40.	The Vanishing Tribes	The Todas of the Nilgiris, South India.	Purchased from Art Films of Asia Pvt. Ltd., Bombay	1961	17 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
41.	Bottled Cannibals	A cartoon film on the ill effects of drinking.	Production B.R. Shendge Director Shaila Parelkar and and V.G. Samant	1978	9 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
42.	Where Time Stands Still	The life of the people of Abhujmad, Bastar Dist.	Production Krishna Kapil Director Deepak Haldankar	1978	12 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
43.	Chitrakathi	The ancient folk art of Konkan, Maharashtra.	Director Mani Kaul Producer Mushir Ahmed	1978	19 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
44.	Glimpses of Assam	The culture of the Khasis and the Nagas.	Director Mohan Wadhwani Producer M. Bhavani	1952	12 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
45.	The Golden River (Kaveri)	The course of the Kaveri river and the utilisation of its waters.	Director P.V. Pathy	1954	10 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
46.	Darjeeling	Depicts the beauty of the hill station and tells the story of a 3 day trek to Phalut.	Director K.L. Khandpur Producer M. Bhavani	1954	11 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
47.	Songs of Bengal	Folk music and songs of riverside villages in Bengal.	Obtained from Little cinema Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta.	1959	11 mins.	35mm & 16 mm	Black & white
48.	Adivasis	A glimpse into the life of the four million tribal people scattered all over Madhya Pradesh. The change brought about by Government sponsored co-operatives.		1958	12 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white

Sl. no.	Title	Subject	Producer Director	Year	Duration	Projection	Colour and Black & white
49.	Changing Perspectives	Life of the people of Nagaland.		1970	9 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
50.	A Home away from Home	The Tibetan exodus of 1959.		1964	15 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
51.	Report from the Heartland	Deals with the life and customs of 20 million Adivasis of India, and the progressive revolution taking place. Details of the Community Project Administration's programme are also shown.		1956	17 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
52.	Against the Current	Depicts the Indo-New Zealand Jet-boat Expedition against the current from Gangasagar to Gomukh.		1985	21 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
53.	Hynñew Trep	The film documents the original beliefs, customs, rituals and some of the folk tales of the Khasis.		1986	25 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
54.	Yamuna	The history of the Golconda fort, one of the largest in the world, built by the Qutub Shahi Kings in the 16th & 17th centuries.		1981	11 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
55.	Song of the South	A study of the art, industry and agricultural wealth of the former state of Travancore, Cochin.		1954	11 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
56.	Sangeet Bharat-Serial II (Folk songs of Gujarat Part I)	Shows the importance of music in the daily life of the people of Gujarat.		1957	17 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
57.	Closing Centuries Opening Years	Presents the myriad aspects of Naga life and their intense efforts to raise their living standards.		1966	14 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
58.	Kumaon Hills	Unfolds the beauty of the Kumaon Hills, "the land of the man-eating Tiger", and the Pindari glacier.		1952	12 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour
59.	The Nomad Puppeteer	The life and art of puppeteers in Rajasthan.		1974	20 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Colour

DOORDARSHAN

Sl. no.	Title	Subject	Year	Duration	Projection	Colour/ Black & white
1.	*Kolis*	The Fisherfolk of Konkan.		30 mins.	Video-documentary	Black & white
2.	*Winds of Change*	The tribes of Bastar.		40 mins.	" "	Black & white

MISCELLANEOUS ETHNOGRAPHIC FILMS

Sl. no.	Title	Subject	Year	Duration	Projection	Colour/ Black & white
1.	*Annual Hunting Festivals*	A Santhal festival held on April fullmoon and marked by holding courts for pending social offences.	1967	9 mins.	16 mm	Black & white
2.	*Forgotten Head-Hunters*	The spring festival of the Wanchrus of Arunachal Pradesh.	1977	10 mins.	16 mm	Colour
3.	*Apatani Sacrifice*	Mloko ritual amongst the tribes in Arunachal Pradesh—sacrifice for the fertility of their fields.	1977	10 mins.	16 mm	Colour
4.	*The Chenchus of Andhra Pradesh*	The changes in the Chenchu's lives brought about by modern education.	1971	26 mins.	35 mm & 16 mm	Black & white
5.	*Ekti Mech Parivarer Kahini*	The aspects of change among the Mech.	1956	12 mins.	16 mm	Black & white
6.	*Bihor*	Social—economic life of the nomads of Purvilla Dist., West Bengal.	1964	28 mins.	16 mm	Colour
7.	*The Oraons of the Sunderbans*	Life of the Oraons in the Dist. of 24 Parganas, West Bengal.	1969	18 mins.	16 mm	Black & white
8.	*Impact of Modern Education on the Tribals of W. Bengal*	The education imparted by the Govt. of W. Bengal	1973	18 mins.	16 mm	Black & white
9.	*Santals of Dohapara*	The life of the santal migrants from Bangladesh	1976	13 mins.	16 mm	Black & white
10.	*Penance, Performance and Protest*	A film on Gambhira—the socially conscious folk theatre of W. Bengal.	1974	15 mins.	35 mm	Black & white
11.	*The Bauls*	The Music of the Vaishnava mendicants of Bengal.	1978	20 mins.	16 mm	Black & white
12.	*Ramlila of Ramnagar*	The celebration of the 30 day Ramlila festival of Ramnagar, Benaras.	1978	50 mins.	16 mm	Black & white
13.	*Kalbelias of Rajasthan*	The puppeteers of Rajasthan.				

LIST OF FEATURE FILMS TO BE SHOWN AT THE SEMINAR ON VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY, AT JODHPUR, DEC., 1987

Sl. no.	Title	Subject	Producer Director	Year	Duration	Projection	Colour and Black & white
1.	*Thampu*	An itinerant circus troupe from Kerala.	Director A. Aravindan	1978	130 mins.	35 mm	Black & white
2.	*Manthan*	The life of milk producers—dairy co-operatives in Gujarat.	Director Shyam Benegal	1976	134 mins.	35 mm	Colour
3.	*Aakrosh*	"Liberation Anthropology"—injustice towards tribals.	Director Govind Nihalni	1980	144 mins.	35 mm	Colour
4.	*Garam Hawa*	The predicament of the Muslims during the partition of India.	Director M.S. Sathyu	1975	136 mins.	35 mm	Colour
5.	*36 Chowringhee Lane*	The plight of the Anglo-Indians trapped between two worlds.	Director Aparna Sen	1982	122 mins.	35 mm	Colour
6.	*Ghatashraddha*	Caste conflict and inhuman treatment of widows in traditional Hindu society.	Director Girish Kasaravadhi	1977	144 mins.	35 mm	Black & white
7.	*Phaniyamma*	The cruel treatment of widows, and the change in attitudes over a 50 year span	Director Prema Karanth	1982	115 mins.	35 mm	Colour